

Illinois Historical Survey















# *A Course of Empire*

By

Associate Professor of American History, Marietta College; Secretary of the Ohio Valley Historical Society; Author of "Historic Highways of America," "Washington and the West"; Editor of "The Crown Collection of American Maps"

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With Maps and Illustrations

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TO MY BROTHER

HENRY

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED  
IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A NEVER-FAILING DEVOTION  
AND ENCOURAGEMENT  
THAT HAS BEEN AS PRECIOUS AS IT EVER WAS  
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## Note

IN the preparation of this volume the author has been aided especially by Theodore Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, Cist's *Miscellanies*, Charles Moore's *The Northwest under Three Flags*, Collins's *History of Kentucky*, Hinsdale's *Old Northwest*, Reuben Gold Thwaites's *On the Storied Ohio*, Smith's *The St. Clair Papers*, Zadoc Cramer's *The Navigator*, and Sherman Day's *Historical Collections of Pennsylvania*. A large number of other works will be found mentioned in text and footnote indicating the author's further indebtedness to many other writers.

It is necessary for him to repeat here again his gratitude for the opportunity of a complete run of the splendid collection of Americana recently presented to Marietta College by Rodney M. Stimson, Esq. Certain scrap-books in this collection have afforded him much material.

A. B. H.

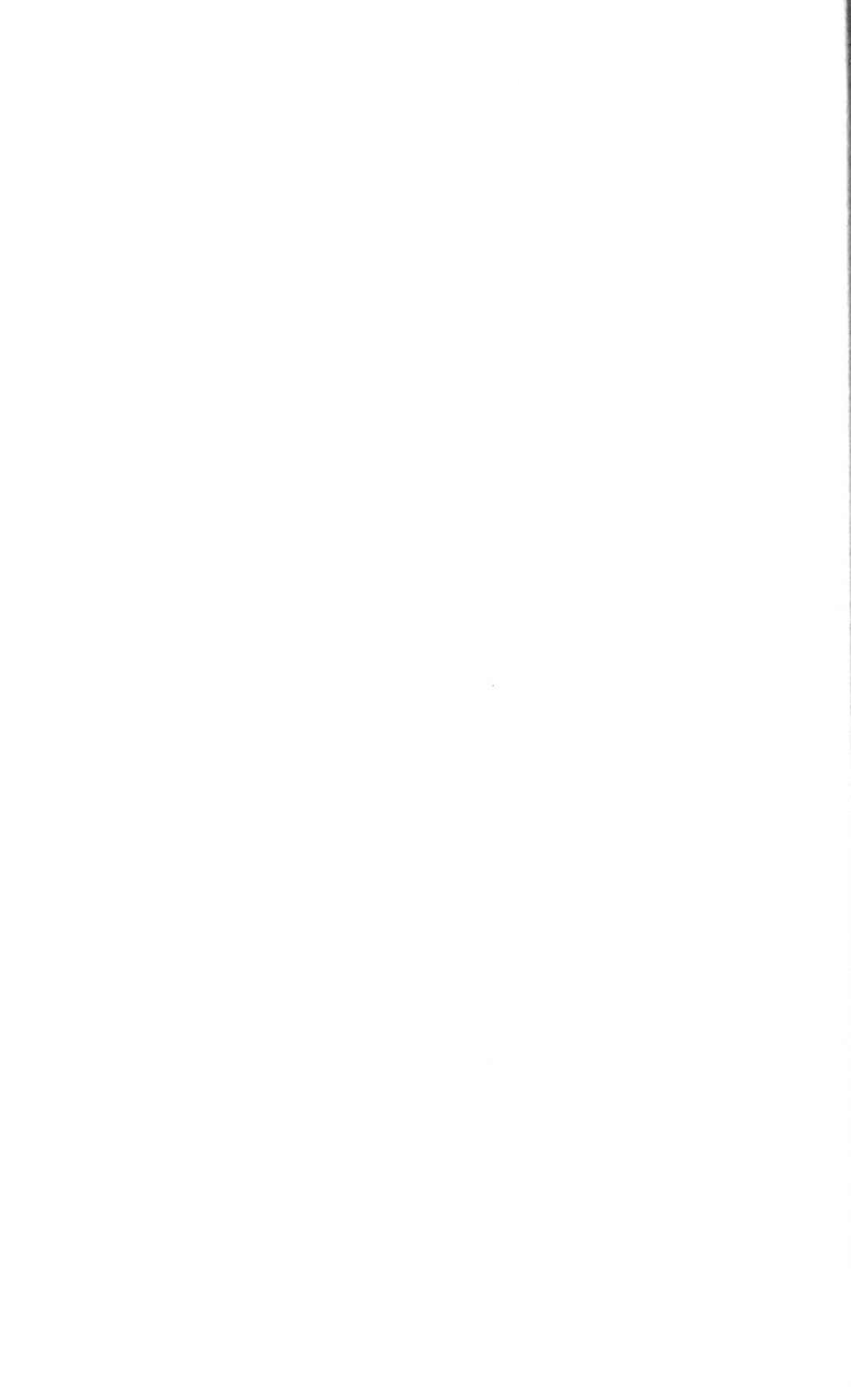
MARIETTA, OHIO,

August 10, 1906.



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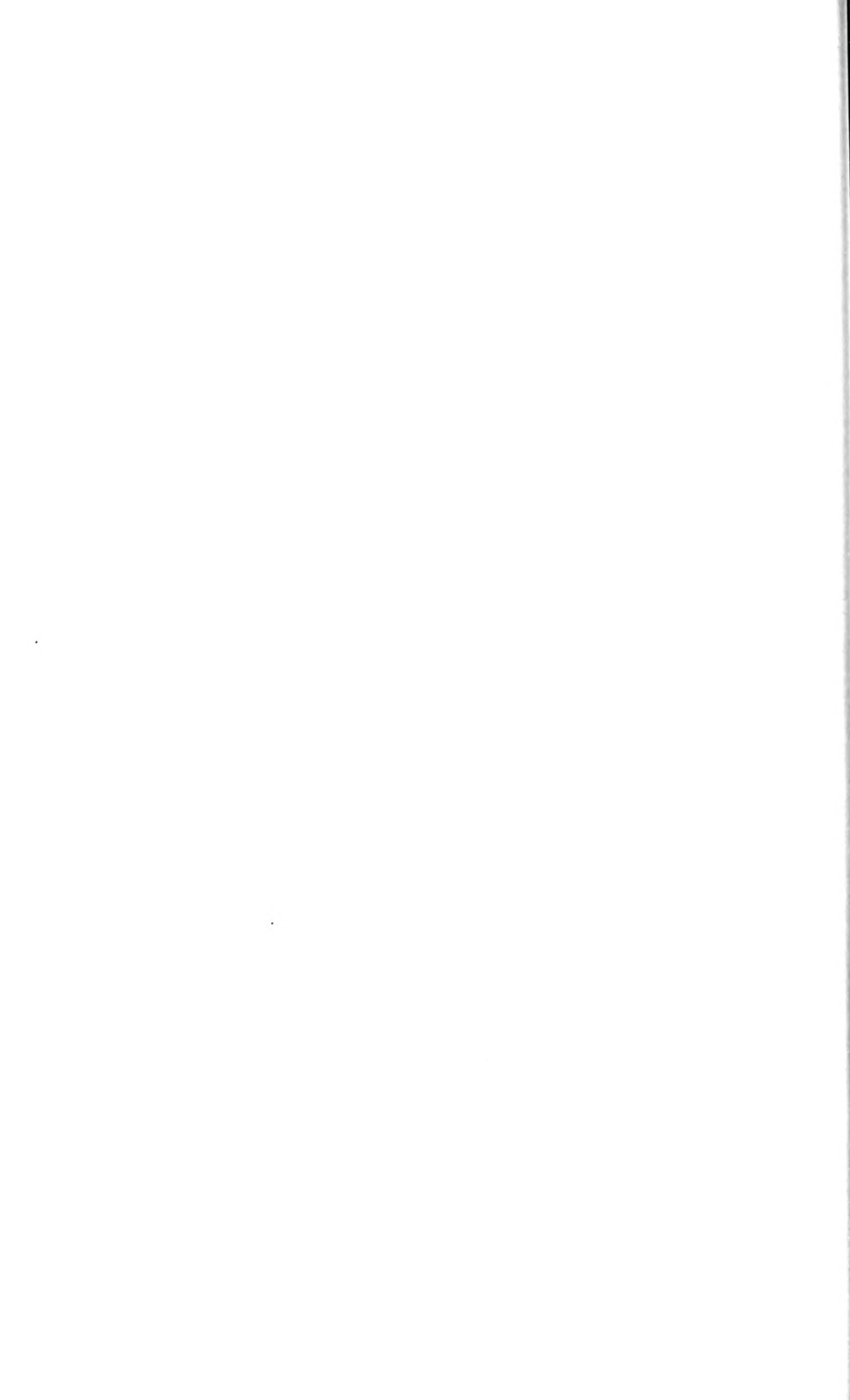
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# The Ohio River



# The Ohio River

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## Chapter I

### Introductory: The River, its Place and Power

FROM whatever standpoint one views the Ohio River it has a most interesting history; but of them all none is more attractive or important than that from which it appears as a strategic avenue of national expansion. "Westward the course of empire takes its way"; this definition of the Ohio River very nearly meets the case. It was a course of empire; the Great Lakes did not become an emigration route until the steamboat had established its reputation in the third decade of the nineteenth century. By that time the entire eastern half of the Mississippi Basin had received a great bulk of its population, and the occupation of its western half was merely a matter of time. From the eastern seaboard there were many river routes into the interior; the St. John, Penobscot, Connecticut, Hudson, Delaware, Potomac, and James were avenues of approach for the race that fell heir to this continent. But once across the Appalachian range there was but one river and on the Ohio and its tributaries that race spread its marvellous conquest. The occupation of

## The Ohio River

the Ohio Basin was of strategic importance because, of necessity, the occupation of the remainder of the continent must follow. The vital question was not whether the Rocky Mountains could be crossed and the Pacific Coast secured but, rather, could the Appalachian Mountains be crossed and the eastern half of the Mississippi Basin be occupied. The Ohio River was one strategic course of empire to the heart of the continent, and there is no phase of its history that is not of imperishable significance.

The first brave English adventurers who looked with eager eyes upon the great river of the Middle West learned that its Indian name was represented by the letters *Oyo*, and it has since been known as the Ohio River. The French, who came in advance of the English, translated the Indian name, we are told, and called the Ohio *La Belle Rivière*, "the beautiful river."

We have, however, other testimony concerning the name that cannot well be overlooked. It is that of the two experienced and well-educated Moravian missionaries, Heckewelder and Zeisberger, who came into the trans-Allegheny country long before the end of the eighteenth century. Upon such a subject as the meaning of Ohio, one might easily hold these men to be final authorities. John Heckewelder affirms that *Oyo* never could have been correctly translated "beautiful"; Zeisberger adds that in the Onondaga dialect of the Iroquois tongue there was a word *oyoneri* which meant "beautiful" but only in the adverbial sense—something that was done "beautifully," or, as we say, done "well." Mr. Heckewelder, knowing that it was commonly understood that the French

had translated *Oyo* when they gave the name *La Belle Rivière* to the Ohio, took occasion to study the matter carefully. He found that in the Miami language *O'hui* or *Ohi*, as prefixes, meant "very"; for instance, *Ohio-peek* meant "very white"; *Ohiopeekhanne* meant "the white foaming river."

The Ohio River [he writes], being in many places wide and deep and so gentle that for many miles, in some places, no current is perceivable, the least wind blowing up the river covers the surface with what the people of that country call "white caps"; and I have myself witnessed that for days together, this has been the case, caused by southwesterly winds (which, by the way, are the prevailing winds in that country), so that we, navigating the canoes, durst not venture to proceed, as these white caps would have filled and sunk our canoes in an instant. Now, in such cases, when the river could not be navigated with canoes, nor even crossed with this kind of craft—when the whole surface of the water presented white foaming swells, the Indians would, as the case was at the time, say, "*juh Ohio piechen, Ohio-peek, Ohiopeekhanne*"; and when they supposed the water very deep they would say "*Kitschi, Ohiopeekhanne*," which means, "verily this is a deep white river."

For one, I like the interpretation of "Ohio" as given by those old missionaries—the "River of Many White Caps." True, there is a splendid, sweeping beauty in the Ohio, but throughout a large portion of its course the land lies low on either bank, and those who have feasted their eyes on the picturesque Hudson, or on the dashing beauty of the Saguenay, have been heard to call in question the judgment of the French who named the Ohio *La Belle Rivière*. But it must be remembered that the French first saw the upper waters of the Ohio, which we now know as the glittering Allegheny. *La Belle Rivière* included the Ohio and the Allegheny; it was not until the English

had reached the Ohio, about the middle of the eighteenth century, that it came to be said that the Allegheny and Monongahela formed the Ohio at Pittsburg. To one acquainted with the roaring Allegheny, dancing down through the New York and Pennsylvania hills, and who can see how clear the waters ran in the dense green of the ancient forests—to such a one it is not difficult to see why the French called it *La Belle Rivière*.

As I write there sounds over and above the noises of a busy little city the long deep booming of an Ohio River steamboat ploughing its way through from Cincinnati to Pittsburg. By day or by night, the hoarse baying of these inland greyhounds is singularly charming; the echoes roll away upon the Virginia hills and then come thundering back upon the heights on the "Indian side," as the Ohio shore was called for so many critical years. And as the mellow notes fade away far inland it occurs to me that if judged by the criterion, "handsome is as handsome does," there is hardly a stream of water in America to compare with the Ohio River. Few streams ever played so vital a part in the development of the United States. Providence meant this should be so. With a lavish hand these waters were thrown where they would count magnificently toward the building of a new republic. Three important conditions were answered: first, a generous quantity of water falls every year within the two hundred thousand square miles drained by the Ohio River and its tributaries; second, a liberal proportion of the water that falls flows away; third, the water passing from this area flows in the right direction—westward.



It will surprise most people to be told that very nearly one fourth of all the water that reaches the Gulf of Mexico through the mouths of the Mississippi comes from the Ohio River. While the drainage area of the Missouri is much greater than that of the Ohio, and the rainfall in that area is proportionally larger, yet the land is more thirsty there, and the result is that a smaller proportion of the water that falls flows away. Practically, therefore, the Ohio is a much greater river than the Missouri; and, for the same reason, a greater river than the Mississippi above the mouth of the Missouri.

This splendid supply of water falling in the Ohio Basin flows westward—a fact of momentous importance in the destiny of America. Edward Everett said in Faneuil Hall in 1835, when advocating in a public address the building of the Boston and Albany Railway,

The destinies of the country, if I may use a language which sounds rather mystical, but which every one, I believe, understands,—the destinies of the country run east and west. Inter-course between the mighty interior west and the seacoast is the great principle of our commercial prosperity and political strength.

In the pages that follow it will be seen how the Ohio reached far out into the foothills of the Alleghenies and Cumberland Mountains beckoning to the colonists on the Atlantic seacoast; with outstretched arms, spread as wide apart as are the sources of the Allegheny on the north and those of the Tennessee on the south, the Ohio River called through the dark forests to the conquerers of the West to come to their own for their own would receive them gladly.

No sooner was the call obeyed than the Ohio became a busy river, which is better, after all, than a beautiful river. Long before the booming note of a steamer's whistle echoed through these western hills was heard the cry of the pilot's voice in the prow of the long, heavy canoes; back and forth on the main trunk of the Ohio and into its more important tributaries, the Allegheny, Monongahela, Muskingum, Wabash, Kanawha, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Cumberland, sped these light craft carrying the earliest loads of freight—great packs of furs and casks of salt and provisions.

The history of the Ohio River might very well be divided into four ages and the first would be the Canoe Age when the steersman's voice rang clearly over the waters which flowed swiftly through their winding aisles in the forests. Then the rush of emigration into the West relegated the canoe to the smaller streams when the keelboats and flatboats and brigs came—when the boatman's magic horn drowned out the steersman's voice and heralded the Flatboat Age.

There is no believing the stories told of the busy scenes on this river and its tributaries while it was for a few mad years hurrying a whole vast Nation into the Middle West. Sixty and seventy flatboats have been seen to pass a given point (Bellville, West Virginia, for instance) in a single day. The European statesman who prophesied a dismemberment of America, soon after independence was secured, never saw this fleet of homeseekers hurrying along the Ohio to find new lands—whose memories of the homes they had left in the East were as precious and tender

as their courage was noble and unflinching. In Europe mountains had almost become imperative boundaries of empire ; and therefore it was believed that the Alleghenies would eventually divide two empires in America. The reverse of this was true, for it seems that the very hardships these early emigrants endured on those bleak mountains, the tears the pioneer women shed, the suffering the men and boys endured, made them all love the old homes behind them better; made it impossible for them to harbor a thought of political alienation. And then, at the foot of the mountains lay the head-streams of the Ohio; the horns of boatmen just gone before them could be heard echoing along the hills—a siren voice calling them down the broad stream. In almost a moment's time the population of the Ohio Basin sprang from 783,635 to 3,620,314 souls. The average increase of percentage of permanent population in the States of the Old Northwest in the Ohio Valley during the first five decades of the nineteenth century was over 182 per decade. Indiana's population between 1810 and 1820 increased over 500 per cent.—a record equalled only three times in all the phenomenal "rushes" of recent years into the Western States. Those who prophesied political separation of this great people, many of whom had fought in the armies of independence, never heard a boatman's horn or read aright its simple and powerfully patriotic message.

But the boatman's horn died away, as had the echoes of the rough steersman's cry, and the booming note of the steamboat's whistle heralded the Steamboat Age. As both the voice and the mellow note of the horn had been typical of their Ages, so the

shrill cry of the steam whistle is typical of the third period of Ohio River history. The Ohio itself had changed little in all these years. In a decade the United States spent almost as much in building the Old National Road from the Potomac to the Ohio as it has spent on Ohio River improvement in three quarters of a century. In the Canoe Age and Flatboat Age the river was practically useless half the year; in the winter it was ice-bound; in summer it ran dry. Pioneers unacquainted with the Ohio thought their hardships were over when the Alleghenies had been scaled. Imagine the surprise of Ephraim Cutler, for instance, who emigrated from Killingly, Connecticut, to Marietta, Ohio; he came four hundred miles from his home to Williamsport, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela River, with cart and oxen in fifty-nine days; it took him thirty-one days more to *float* two hundred miles down-stream to Marietta. As late as 1866 it was estimated that there were two hundred and eighty-five dangerous obstructions in the Ohio such as snags, logs, and wrecked boats. Reefs and bars were not counted.

Along the shores a vast change had come over the face of the wilderness during the Flatboat Age, and the steamboats marked not only the rise of the great industries but also the swift advance of the cities, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, and Louisville. While statistics on the subject are almost inaccessible yet it is beyond question that until the Steamboat Age the majority of the population in what may be called the Ohio Valley was not along the Ohio River. In pioneer days the immediate banks of the river were not suitable for habitation. This was true in prehistoric and

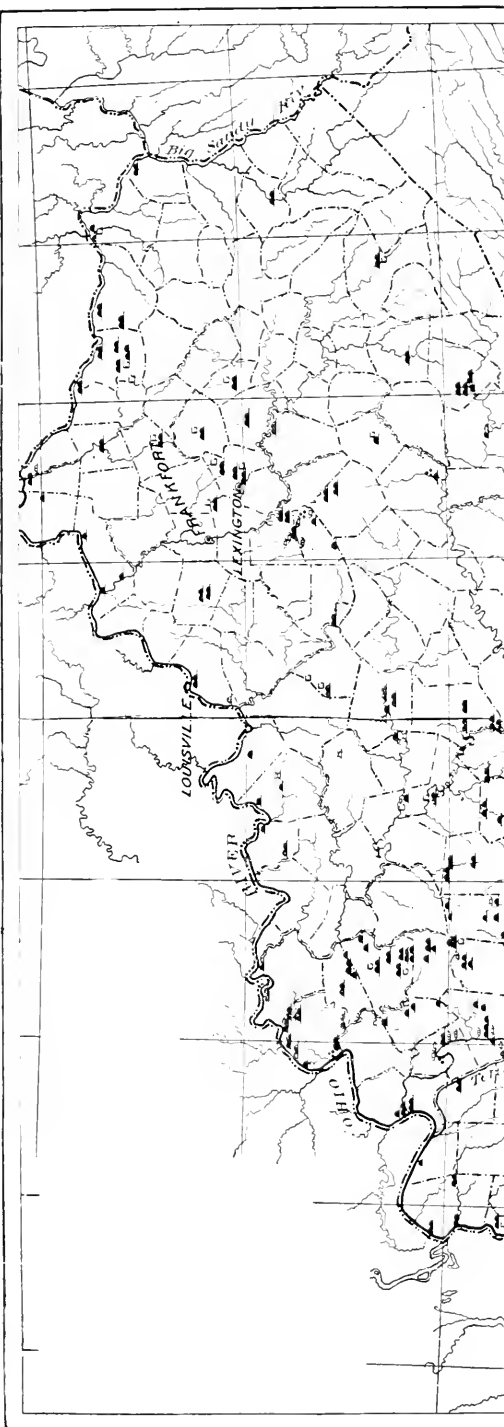
Indian days. Take a map of the works built by the Moundbuilding Indians and it is clear that the smaller tributaries of the Ohio River were the favorite locations of those earliest tribes. It is on the Miami, Scioto, and Licking rivers in Ohio that we find the chief monuments of that prehistoric race. A great mound at Moundsville, West Virginia, and the impressive works at Marietta and Portsmouth are the only really significant monuments on the banks of the Ohio, while on the lesser interior tributaries we find vast quantities of these remains.

The same thing seems to be true of the Indian nations which white men found in this same drainage area. The chief seats of the Delaware, Shawanese, and Miami nations were not on the Ohio River, but rather on the Miami, Scioto, and upper Muskingum rivers. Save the Shawanese town at the mouth of the Scioto there was hardly an Indian town of any prominence on the Ohio River until such early commercial villages as Logstown near Pittsburg and Shawneetown near Portsmouth, Ohio, were established; and the Scioto town was ruined by a flood and entirely abandoned for a safer location near the present Chillicothe, Ohio. A pioneer in Ohio, writing of the location of the Ohio Indians, says: "Their habitations were at the heads of the principal streams." The rule was quite invariable in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. There were practically no Indian settlements in Kentucky or western Virginia; the meadow-land—*Ken-ta-ke*—was a favorite hunting-ground, and the Indians never resided in their hunting-grounds.

Many of the reasons which inclined the earlier inhabitants of the Ohio Valley influenced the first

white people who came thither. The bottom-lands on the immediate river shore were rich but they were comparatively few in number, and the flood-tides of the Ohio throughout the centuries made the river locations unhealthy; the bottom-land farms were often widely separated by projecting bluffs, while in the equally rich interior the newly cleared farms were closely joined and the community of interests thus secured by the proximity of numerous pioneer farmers gave rise to villages and towns. The Ohio's being the boundary line of counties did not make it a central site for county-seats. Only six of the county-seats of the fourteen Ohio River counties are on that river. The few important towns that sprang up on the banks of the Ohio in the Canoe and Flatboat Ages were the ports of embarkation and debarkation; of the former class Brownsville and Pittsburg in Pennsylvania and Wheeling in western Virginia were the most prominent; while of the latter class Cincinnati in Ohio, Maysville and Louisville in Kentucky, Madison and Evansville in Indiana, and Shawneetown in Illinois were the most important.

The most spectacular change that came with the dawning of the Steamboat Age was the swift advance of certain of these entrepôts in point of population—the crowning the beautiful valley with three imperial cities—and the commercial awakening upon and under the earth. In a moment's time the hail of the steamer's whistle was answered on land by ten thousand cries of triumph from as many brazen throats—and the note of the boatman's horn was as far lost amid the blue hills, measured by hopes and dreams, as the forgotten patrol's cry from the prow of the heavy canoe.



Location of the Works of the Mound-Building Indians in Kentucky, Showing that the Favorite Sites Were in the Interior, away from the Ohio River.

2000



Between the cities, towns and villages sprang up in the Steamboat Age to live and thrive until the steamboat reached and passed the crest of its popularity. The steamboat reigned as king of the inland waters from 1820 to about the beginning of the Civil War in 1860, as the flatboat had reigned through the forty years preceding 1820. At the middle of the nineteenth century palatial steamers left Pittsburg, Cincinnati, and Louisville every day in the week, and an unnumbered list of smaller lines plied between the cities and lesser towns. With the building of what are now the Pennsylvania, Ohio River, Chesapeake and Ohio, Louisville and Nashville, and Baltimore and Ohio railways the steamboat trade, which had grown to enormous proportions, quickly sank to a comparatively trifling figure. The heavy passenger trade vanished entirely; the freight traffic was greatly diminished. You cannot go by a regular steamboat to-day from Pittsburg to St. Louis, or from Pittsburg to Louisville, or from Cincinnati to St. Louis. In a trip from Pittsburg to St. Louis you must change boats at Cincinnati, Louisville, and Cairo. Many thriving towns which were points of national importance half a century ago in the Steamboat Age have been ignored by the railways and lie sleeping in the sun and in the snow dreaming only of the old days and their merry scenes. Other towns, like Maysville, Kentucky, have retained something of their old-time position in the whirl of modern life.

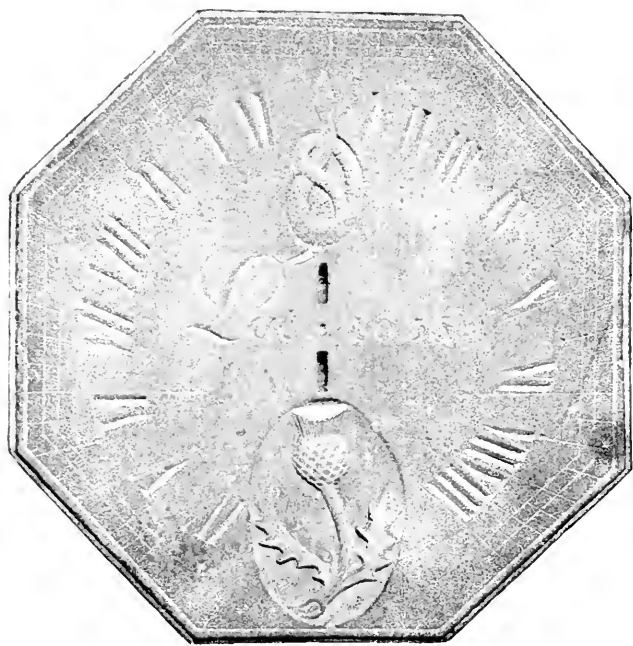
But there is another and more telling form in which to review this marvellous river's history than by the varying form of craft which plied its waters; and this is by picturing typical representatives of the

several classes of people in whose lives this stream played a part. Indeed the following pages, after those necessarily given to the period of conquest, will be found to be studies of men. The Ohio River is remarkable in this respect, the tremendous human interest which attaches to its history. No river of its size in America gave a livelihood to more people in a century's time; many which approximate or equal the Ohio in historic importance, as the Potomac, bear no comparison with it on the score of the personal element.

There was, first, the explorer, the brave La Salle, who first of Europeans saw the Ohio Valley; after him comes a long line of equally brave, picturesque men down to George Washington, the first to leave us an approximately accurate description of it. In this army of explorers we find the names of America's boldest adventurers, Gist, Croghan, Boone, Washington, George Rogers Clark, Kenton, Lewis, and William Clark. England gave America no great explorers, no successors to La Salle, Champlain, Marquette, Brulé, and Joliet. The above named list of fearless adventurers were born on this continent and bred to lives that made them the patriots and heroes they were.

And after the explorers of the Ohio came that swarthy, rough army of borderers who wrestled with the Indian for the mastery. In this list we must repeat almost every name previously given and add many more, as the Poes, Wetzells, Girtys, Crawford, Harmar, St. Clair, "Mad Anthony" Wayne, and William Henry Harrison.

When the fighting was done came the rush of the



Sun-dial Used at Fort Duquesne.

19

pioneer hosts to the Ohio, Dutch, Irish, Scotch, and Quaker, pious, long-legged Yankee, roistering, chivalrous Virginian, rich man, poor man, beggar man, and thief. This era calls vainly for an historian to chronicle its real story of commingled generosity and avarice, rough hospitality and murder—the passionate lust of an unbridled multitude leaping into a wilderness. On this count no American river ever can approach the Ohio; on no other river in the world has such a remarkable social movement ever spent its force.

Upon analyzation this multitude naturally falls into many distinct classes bringing into bold relief a score of personal types that are interesting: there were the conscienceless land-jobbers selling that which they did not own—a large class scattered widely in the Ohio Valley; there were the hardy, honest surveyors who played a useful part in their day; there were the promoters of cities and towns arguing forcefully with the plat of town-lots in their hands; the varying types of rivermen, masters, sailors, oarsmen, packers, roustabouts, polers, flatboatmen, keelboatmen, rafters, and beachcombers, form as unique a human element as can be found in all western history. Mike Fink is as distinct a character as any Dickens ever drew, and all worthy of a Dickens's pen, as is true of Colonel Plug, Micajah Harpe, and Wilson's gang. Special mention must be made of the flatboatmen, a cursing mob of men who bore the brunt of the toil and weariness that must fall on some shoulders if a civilization was to be born in a day in a new land; slaving at the "sweep" or at the "gouger" through many exhausting hours, the very frolic of these men had to be a brutal frolic. As a consequence the

“bully” of the valley knew how to fight with hands, knees, elbows, shoulders, feet, head, and teeth; and, as we shall see, an amazed traveller, when asking how to tell a respectable tavern from the reverse was advised not to stop with a landlord who was minus a nose or ear.

In more recent days the host of captains and deckhands and the other hundred odd *engagés* in the Steamboat Age form the last of these interesting groups of Ohio River heroes.

## Chapter II

### Where France and England Met

WHO can describe the old Ohio as it lay beneath the sun and stars a century and a half ago? Who of us can, even in imagination, picture this great waterway bound in on either side by the Black Forest of America—a long, shining aisle through a fair, green world? This is the bright side of the picture, the forest green, the silvery call of the rapids, the lower monotone of the sweeping current. The poets paint such scenes and crown their fair creation with an Indian maiden singing beside her work in a gilded canoe.

But such pictures are not inspired by a careful study of our pioneer literature, at least so far as the Ohio River might be concerned. The dark side of the picture must overshadow the light; the havoc of the floods and storms removed from the scene much of beauty, and the bitter conditions of life in those distant days eliminated almost everything of joy. We are speaking of actual conditions that existed upon the Ohio before it was possessed by a white race. It has already been made plain that the shores of the river were not popular as the sites of Indian villages, and it can easily be imagined how the old-time floods affected the river shores; to-day, when much of the river bank

is comparatively free of timber, the effects of the great floods are seen and felt for a long period after the waters have receded; what, then, was the case when the river banks and bottoms were one tangled mass of tree and vine into which the sun could never shine save in winter when the ground was frozen?

Moreover in our day the great piles of driftwood and the wild miscellaneous plunder of the floods is rapidly cleared away from river shore and bottom-land; fancy the day when the deposit of the floods along the Ohio shores had continued ceaselessly for centuries—gigantic mountains of flood-plunder from the upper rivers thrown up in the dark, wet forest labyrinth at the foot of the great curves of the Ohio. At some points these great reeking monuments to the fury of the waters were almost terrifying to look upon, and no one but a collector of reptiles would ever climb them. When these shaggy mountains of broken and twisted trees accumulated in the centre of a river they often formed a treacherous bridge and became of use to the early travellers who came that way.

When General Butler came to the lower Ohio to hold a treaty with the Indians he was advised by friendly natives to build his fort far back on the hills as the floods below the mouth of the Wabash often spread over bottom-lands five miles in width. In the winter seasons the ice jams were not less gigantic than those sometimes formed to-day; and, without modern means of handling these dangerous phenomena, they spent their titanic forces along the Ohio shores and sometimes for miles into the bottom-land interior. The forests, however, proved a buttress against this evil and held in check vast fields of ice





An Ohio River ice gorge at Evansville, Indiana.

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl a) is the primary photosynthetic pigment in most plants and algae. It is responsible for capturing light energy and converting it into chemical energy through the process of photosynthesis.

which piled up to a great height where the trees held them at bay.

The continual falling of forests along its banks tended to make either shore of the river an intricate network of water-soaked trunks and branches. The conditions tended to preserve for a very long while this steadily increasing tangle of root and branch and it is probable that the pilot of a frail canoe in the old days had to continue to look with a keen eye for a place to land for many rods and, in some places, miles, before finding a suitable landing and camping place. The more prominent of these obstructions were called "planters" and "sawyers" by the pioneers. Planters were logs which were imbedded in the river bed and stuck out of the water either straight up or slanting and which were immovable. They were the most dangerous obstacles in pioneer river navigation. Sawyers were trunks or limbs of trees protruding from the water which were kept in motion by the swinging tides of the river; as the name implies, they kept "sawing." These usually pointed downstream and boats could often be shoved over if they happened to run foul of them. Bars, snags, rocks, and sunken logs were other dangers, and an early Ohio River pilot in canoe or flatboat had to possess sharp ears as well as sharp eyes; for it was a legend among old rivermen that boats floated faster in the night than in the daytime (for the same reason, no doubt, that corn grows faster at night than in the day!) and the sound of the water "riffing" around the rocks, "planters," and "sawyers" was the one and only warning that the steersman had of danger.

Such must have been some aspects of the "River

of Many White Caps" when the eyes of the first adventurous Europeans looked through the leafy forests upon it. Some of these early pilgrims left records of their experiences which have come down to us, and though in the main they are little more than records of the temperature of the water and the temper of the Indian, yet they are our earliest accounts and as such are precious memorials of the dawning of civilization in the eastern half of the Mississippi Basin.

There is no question but that the brave La Salle discovered La Belle Rivière of New France (the Allegheny and Ohio) about 1670. He left no record that confirms this but his later references to the region of the Ohio are almost conclusive evidence that he descended that river probably to "the Falls," as the rapids of Louisville have been known since the dawn of history in the West. It was in the last year of the first half of the eighteenth century that the first European to leave record of it sailed the waters of the Ohio. This was Céloron de Bienville, a chevalier of the military order of St. Louis commanding a detachment sent to La Belle Rivière by Marquis de la Galissonnière, commander of all New France and the country of Louisiana. The story of the advance from Montreal of this picturesque company of men, comprising "a captain, eight subaltern officers, six cadets, an armorer, twenty men of the troops, one hundred and eighty Canadians, and nearly thirty savages—equal number of Iroquois and Abenakes," is the very epitome of romance.

As is well known, both England and France claimed the Mississippi Basin, the former through the discoveries of Cabot and the latter through the exploration

of La Salle. Cabot discovered the American coast line and claimed possession of all the land in the interior for his English King. La Salle in 1682 buried a leaden plate at the mouth of the Mississippi, which claimed for his Bourbon King all the land drained by the waters which there passed into the sea! The French, established on the St. Lawrence, had found their way westward to the Great Lakes by the Ottawa River, the St. Lawrence being controlled by the Iroquois or Six Nations whose enmity was recklessly incurred at an early date. Reaching the Great Lakes the French voyageurs, traders, and daring missionaries pressed on to the Mississippi by way of the Illinois, Wabash, and Wisconsin rivers and formed a connection finally with the Louisiana colony and its capital, New Orleans. Thus the region watered by the Ottawa River, Lakes Huron, Michigan, and Superior, and all the tributaries of the upper Mississippi, including the Wabash and lower Ohio, came under the influence of the King of France and contributed of its vast wealth of fur to his coffers, filtering through the fingers of peculating agents and governors.

The English on the Atlantic seaboard were slow in reaching out to the rich West; their love of home-building was greater than their love of adventure for gain. Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century there was continual fighting between the French on the St. Lawrence and the colonists in New England, and as the French began to ascend the St. Lawrence and occupy Lake Ontario the Six Nations proved valuable to the English in defending the province of New York from their encroachments. To the westward of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia,

the English, who, by 1750, began sifting up the rivers into the Alleghenies, found no French. At about this date, it was revealed, as in a dream, to both English and French governors, that the garden spot of the new continent lay just beyond the Alleghenies, between the Great Lakes and the Blue Ridge, stretching westward to the Mississippi. This was the Ohio Valley; the colonists knew almost nothing of it; the French knew little more than the one fact that La Salle had been there and by his plate buried at the mouth of the Mississippi had formally established the French claim. Because of having alienated the Six Nations, who were masters of all the territory between the Hudson and the Wabash and as far south as the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, the French had gone to the discovery of the West by way of the Ottawa, and therefore knew almost nothing of Lake Ontario, the Niagara River, and Lake Erie—and this precious Ohio Basin below it.

In 1747 an enterprising company of Virginia gentlemen conceived the plan of securing from the King of England a grant of land on the Ohio River. The purpose of these men is nowhere more clearly outlined than in the records of the Committee of Council of the Lords of Trade:

Whereas His Majesty was pleased by His Order in Council of the 11th of last month to referr unto this Committee the humble Petition of John Hanbury of London Merchant in behalf of himself and of Thomas Lee Esq. a Member of His Majesty's Council and one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature in His Majesty's Colony of Virginia, Thomas Nelson, Esq<sup>re</sup>, also a Member of His Majesty's Council in Virginia, Colonel Cressup, Colonel William Thornton, William Nimmo, Daniel Cressap, John Carlisle, Lawrence Washington, Augustus

Washington, George Fairfax, Jacob Gyles, Nathaniel Chapman and James Woodrop, Esq<sup>res</sup>, all of His Majesty's Colony of Virginia and others their Associates for settling the Countrys upon the Ohio and extending the British Trade beyond the Mountains on the Western confines of Virginia humbly praying . . . to grant to them . . . a Tract of 500,000 acres of land betwixt Romanettos and Buffalo's Creek on the south side of the River Aligane [Allegheny] otherwise the Ohio and betwixt the two creeks and the Yellow Creek on the north side of the River or in such parts of the West of the said Mountains as shall be adjudged most proper by the Petitioners . . . on condition of the Petitioners Seating at their proper expense a hundred Familys upon the lands in seven years . . . The Lords of the Committee this day took the said Petition into their consideration and are hereby pleased to referr the same to the Lords Commissioners for Trade and Plantations to consider thereof and Report their Opinion thereupon to this Committee [the tributaries] of Mississippi and those of Potomac are only separated by one small Ridge of Mountains, easily passable by Land Carriage, so that by the Convenience of Navigation of the Potomac and a short land carriage from thence to the West of the Mountains and to the Branch of the Ohio and the Lake Erie British Goods may be carried at little expense and afforded reasonably to the Indians in those parts.

It is difficult to estimate how far this was a genuine business adventure and how far it was a piece of political manœuvring; it is sure that acquiescence to the request could fairly be expected from England because the settlement would be a significant test-case in the controversy as to whether France or England possessed the West.

The almost immediate departure from Montreal of that body of men under Céloron was the electrifying answer the Governor of Canada made to this announcement of a grant of land in the Ohio Valley to Virginia promoters by England's King! Céloron's advance

into the great green valley of the West is like the heavy stalking of mediæval soldiery into the pages of modern history; and though the Canadians and Indians who crowded the twenty-three swift canoes give a modern light to this picture of the Céloron expedition, yet as a whole it is an old-time picture, as though woven in fresh, modern green upon an ancient bit of tapestry. You can see the swirl of the waters above the buried paddles, you can see the bright flash of sunlight from the blades as they rise with the steady rhythm of the paddlers; slowly the procession ascends the St. Lawrence; slowly the long portages around the tumbling rapids are made. Here at the carrying-places our attention is soon attracted to the peculiar contents of one of the canoes; a crate or box, which is extraordinarily heavy for its small size, taxes the energies of two stalwart men at each of the portages; and here lies a secret meaning of Céloron's adventure, which classes it unalterably with an ancient pageant or mediæval mummary. The crate contains six or more leaden plates, about eleven inches long, seven inches wide, and an eighth of an inch in thickness, which are to be deposited at the mouths of all important rivers that empty into the Ohio, in order to reassert French sovereignty in that valley and all its tributary valleys! If La Salle's plate at the mouth of the Mississippi was not sufficient, the whole Ohio Valley, if necessary, would be filled with these proofs of French possession. And if leaden plates would not answer to hold the Ohio, leaden bullets should!

Céloron left Montreal (La Chine) June 15, 1749; on the 27th he reached Fort Frontenac and on July



LAN 1749 DV REGNE DE LOVIS XV ROY DE  
 FRANCE NOVS CELORON COMMANDANT DVN IS DE  
 TACHEMENT ENVOIE PAR MONSIEVR LE M<sup>re</sup> DE LA  
 CALISSONIERE COMMANDANT GENERAL DE LA  
 NOUVELLE FRANCE POVR RETABLIR LA TRANQUILLITE  
 DANS QUELQUES VILLAGES SAUVAGES DE CES CANTONS  
 AVONS ENTERRE CETTE PLAQUE A L'ENTREE DE LA  
 RIVIERE CHINODAHICHTHA LE 18 AOUST  
 PRES DE LA RIVIERE OYO AUTREMENT BELLE  
 RIVIERE POVR MONUMENT DV RENOVVELLEMENT DE  
 POSSESSION QUE NOVS AVONS PRIS DE LA DITTE  
 RIVIERE OYO ET DE TOUTES CELLES QUI Y TOMBENT  
 ET DE TOUTES LES TERRES DES DEUX COTES JUSQUE  
 AUX SOURCES DES DITTES RIVIERES VINSI QUE NOUS ONT  
 JOUY OV DV JOUIR LES PRECEDENTS ROIS DE FRANCE  
 ET QUELS SISOINT MAINTENVS PAR LES ARMES ET  
 PAR LES TRAITTES SPECIALEMENT PAR CEUX DE  
 RISVICK DVTRCHT ET DAIX LA CHPELLE

Céloron's Lead-Plate Buried at the Mouth of the Great Kanawha River.



6th he reached Fort Niagara. Leaving Niagara on the 15th Céloron cruised along the southern shore of Lake Erie—an unknown shore (for reasons before explained) to the race which had sent its voyageurs from end to end of the Mississippi and many of its tributaries. “I arrived at noon at the portage of Chatakouin,” wrote Céloron in his *Journal*. Here, at what is now Portland, New York, the party, bag and baggage, crossed the taxing portage to Lake Chatauqua, and reaching Conewango Creek from there, the detachment sailed into the Ohio River at noon, July 29th. Céloron said in his *Journal*:

29th, I entered at noon into the Belle Rivière [Ohio]. I buried a lead plate, on which is engraved the possession taken, in the name of the King, of this river and of all those which fall into it. I also attached to a tree the arms of the King, engraved on a sheet of white iron, and over all I drew up a Procès Verbal, which the officers and myself signed.

Copy of the Procès Verbal, of the position of the lead plate and the arms of the King, placed at the entrance of the Belle Rivière [Ohio] with the inscription:

“The year 1749, Céloron, Chevalier of the Order Royal and Military of St. Louis, Captain Commanding a Detachment sent by the orders of Marquis de Gallissonnière, Commander General of Canada on the Belle Rivière, otherwise called the Ohio, accompanied by the principal officers of our detachments, have buried, at the foot of a red oak on the south bank of the river Ohio [Oyo] and of the Chenangon and at 40° 51' 23" a lead plate with inscription:

“ ‘In the year 1749 of the reign of Louis XV., King of France, I, Céloron, Commander of the Detachment sent by the Marquis de la Gallissonnière, Commanding General of New France, to re-establish tranquillity in some villages of these cantons, we have buried this plate, at the confluence of the Ohio and Kanaragon Conewango Creek, July 29th, as a monument of the renewal of possession which we have taken of the

said river Ohio, and of all those that therein empty; and of all the land on both sides to the source of said river, as they were enjoyed, or should have been enjoyed by the preceding Kings of France, and that they are maintained by the arms and by treaties, and especially by those of Reswick, d'Utrecht and of Aix la Chapelle; we have also affixed in the same place to a tree the arms of the King, in testimony of which we have drawn up and signed the present Procès Verbal.

"Done at the entrance of Belle Rivière, July 29th, 1749. All the officers have signed."

From this point where the first plate was buried near Warren, Pennsylvania, this phantom party passed down the Allegheny and Ohio burying their leaden plates and nailing to the trees their sheets of "white iron," or tin. At each place selected the same pompous formality was strictly observed, and plates were buried near the mouths of Conewango Creek and French Creek in Pennsylvania, Wheeling Creek and Great Kanawha River in West Virginia, and the Muskingum and Great Miami rivers in Ohio. Three of these have been recovered.

But Céloron had another mission on the Ohio quite as important as burying these "monuments," and that was to see the Indians of the valley, and ally them to French interests as against the traders of the English colonies. The Senecas, who kept well the western door of the Long House of the Six Nations, were found on the Allegheny, as well as *Loups* or Wolves; this was the French name of the Delawares, who had lately come from the East to settle (by permission of the Six Nations) on and between the Allegheny and Muskingum rivers.

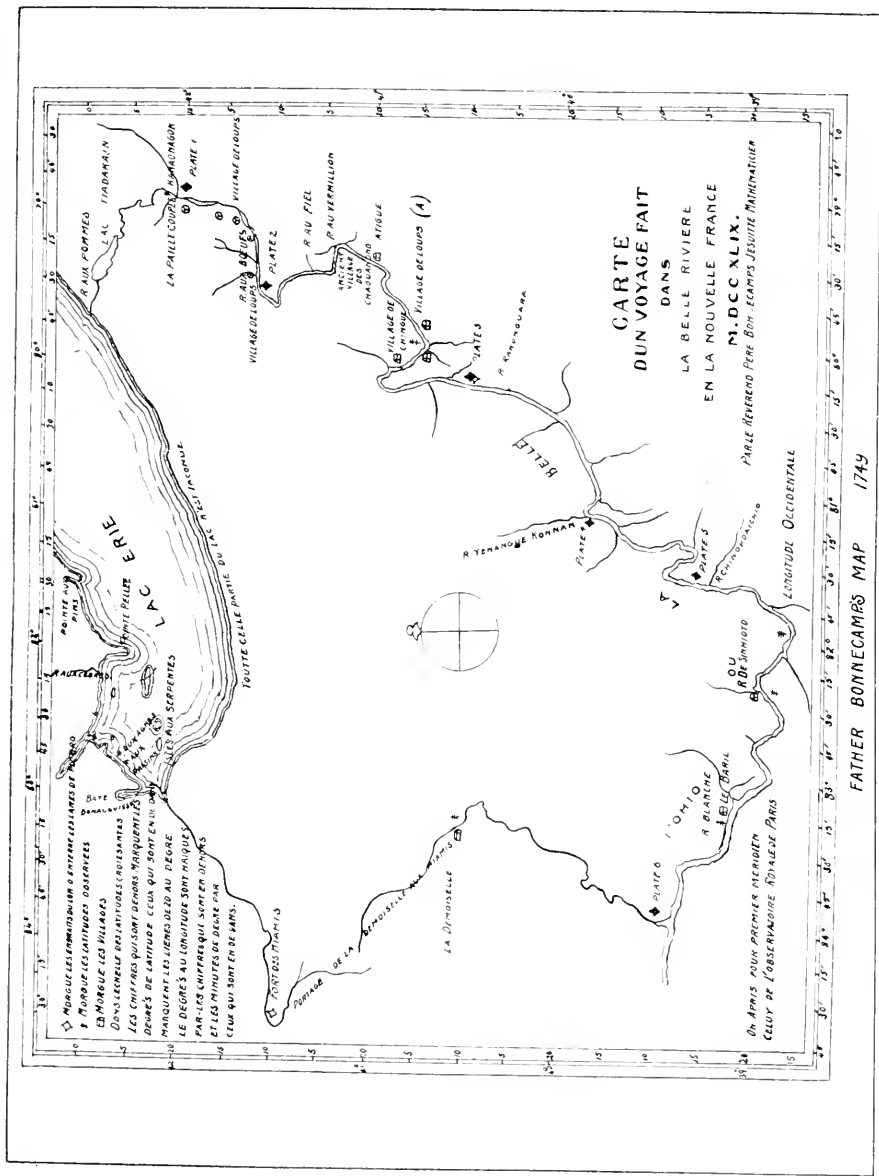
This is what determined me [said the address from the Governor of New France to the Ohio Indians] to send to you

Mr. Céloron, to inform you of my intentions, which are, that I will not suffer the English on my land; and I invite you, if you are my true children, to not receive them any more in your villages. I forbid them, by this belt, the commerce which they have established lately in this part of the land, and announce to you that I will no longer suffer it. . . . I will furnish you with traders in abundance, if you wish for them. I will even place here officers, if that will please you, to govern you and give you the good spirits, so that you will only work in good affairs. . . . Give serious attention, my children, to the words which I send you; listen well, follow it, it is the way to see always in your villages a haven beautiful and serene. I expect from you a reply worthy of my true children. You see the marks to be respected which I have attached along La Belle Rivière, which will prove to the English that this land belongs to me and that they cannot come here without exposing themselves to be chased away. I wish for this time to treat them with kindness and warn them; if they are wise they will profit by my advice.

Though some of the awed denizens of the Allegheny forests gave assurances of loyalty to the French and faithfully kept them, Céloron found, as he passed southward, a warm sentiment for the English. The more important stops were made near the present Franklin [Venango] and Kittaning [Attique], Pennsylvania, and in the suburbs of Pittsburg [Shannopin's Town]. At certain points Céloron found English traders from beyond the mountains and ordered them home sharply, with letters to their provincial governors protesting that no English trader had any right in the Ohio Valley. But Céloron's troubles were not confined to outsiders; the Indians of his own party became disaffected and some of them deserted at the Indian town, Logstown, a little below the present site of Pittsburg. These while returning are said to have

dug up the first plate Céloron buried and to have forwarded it to the Governor of New York. Thus in two ways, at least, the English learned of Céloron's mission on the Ohio.

Overlooking for a moment the deep political significance of this strange flotilla, what did these French think of this almost unknown river? Their records are the first authoritative accounts we have of the old Ohio, clogged with "sawyers" and "planters," its banks a network of bristling trunks and branches, its forest bottom-lands covered with the plunder of the floods. Of all this scarce a mention is made. Céloron's *Journal* notes only the sailings and encampments, the speeches to the various Indian villages and their replies. Father Bonnécamp, the priest, also kept a record of the expedition, and while he does not pay full attention to the political aspects of the mission, he gives us only the smallest glimpse into the great primeval valley. This is of course explained by the fact that the wildness of the virgin Ohio was extremely commonplace to these voyageurs of a thousand forest miles. The journey thither had been severe and Bonnécamp pathetically writes, "Finally, overcome with weariness, and almost despairing of seeing the Beautiful River, we entered it on the 29th at noon." He adds that the Indian village on the site of the present Warren, Pennsylvania, contained "twelve or thirteen cabins; it is called Kananouangon." The Allegheny here is described as lying "between two chains of mountains"; with only such hints as to the river itself and with a snake story thrown in, Bonnécamp continues his record. Under one date he touches that note of gloom which must have been strongly



Bonnecamp's Map Showing the Course of the Céloron Expedition and the Location of the Leadens Plates along the Ohio.





felt by any traveller in the valley: "We continued our route, and we marched [proceeded], as on the first day, buried in the sombre and dismal valley." La Belle Rivière was not a name given by one who had journeyed many days in that dark valley! On the day after he observes: "We continued our route, always surrounded by mountains—sometimes so high that they did not permit us to see the sun before 9 or 10 o'clock in the morning, [or after] 2 or 3 in the afternoon. This double chain of mountains stretches along the Beautiful River, at least as far as Rivière à la Roche [Great Miami]." This was an exaggeration, for the Ohio is not enclosed so tightly in the hills as is the Allegheny. He corrects this later, for in speaking of the Indian villages at the mouth of the Scioto he says: "The situation of the village of the Chaouanons [Shawanese] is quite pleasant—at least, it is not masked by the mountains, like the other villages through which we had passed." This was near the site of the present village of Portsmouth, Ohio.

So far as the records of these first pilgrims on the Ohio go they accord with our sombre picture of the valley as it lay two centuries ago. The French found very few Indian villages and these were often composed of only a half dozen cabins; these may have been long "lodges" capable of sheltering many families and should not be underestimated; but, at a rough guess, Céloron may not have passed in his whole journey from near Warren, Pennsylvania, to Cincinnati (mouth of Great Miami) the homes of more than three hundred Indian families; at five members each the population of the immediate river would have

been fifteen hundred souls—which is probably a liberal estimate. In 1763 Sir William Johnson estimated the western Indian warriors (exclusive of the Illinois) at nine thousand, which would perhaps imply a total population of thirty thousand. The Indians Céloron met belonged to the three divisions, the Six Nations or Iroquois, the Delawares, and the Shawanese. The Iroquois became known as Mingoes on the Ohio—it mattered not from which of the Six Nations they came. In general they lived upon the Allegheny and near the junction of that river and the Monongahela; their principal town was Logstown, near the present village of Economy, Pennsylvania, a little below Pittsburg. The name is preserved in Mingo Bottoms and Mingo Junction near Steubenville, Ohio. The Delawares lived upon the Muskingum River in Ohio, ranging eastward to the Allegheny and Ohio and westward to the Scioto River. Their chief towns were at the present sites of Coshocton and Newcomerstown, Ohio. The Shawanese occupied the Scioto River; their ancient town was on the Ohio at the mouth of that river, but later their capital was removed to Pickaway Plains near the present Chillicothe, Ohio. The Miami nation occupied the river valley of that name, ranging westward to the Wabash and eastward to the Scioto; their chief towns were near Piqua and Dayton in Ohio. South of the Ohio there were no Indian villages, what is now Kentucky having been for some years the rival hunting-grounds of these northern nations and the Indian nations south of the Cumberland Mountains. To the north the Wyandots and Ottawas on the Miami-of-the-Lakes, or Maumee, River, often came southward to

hunt near the Ohio, and the Weas, Kickapoos, and Pottawatomies on the Wabash, and the Illinois, living on the river of that name, were often seen building their camp-fires on the great river to which the Wabash and Illinois led; but the main towns of all these tribes were on the lesser inland tributaries. They saw and knew what the old Ohio was, a dark valley into which the sun hardly shone long enough to dry the prodigious masses of driftwood—and then built their homes along the lesser tributaries in the sunny upland meadows of the interior.

In the struggle between England and France for the Ohio Basin the Indians of the West generally became allied with, and measurably assisted, the French; the Shawanese, Delawares, Wyandots, and many Mingoes, either because of the blandishments of the French or the neglect of the English, were found fighting for New France. So far as the Indians were concerned England had but one, half-mythical right to occupy the region embraced in the charter to the Ohio Company; in 1744, at a treaty at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, between the Governor of Pennsylvania, Colonel Thomas Lee, and Colonel William Beverly as Commissioners from Virginia and the Six Nations, a western territory of undefined extent was said to have been absolutely purchased on the theory that the Six Nations had a right to sell any territory over which they had formerly ruled as conquerors. It will be seen that, as soon as the new Ohio Company sent an agent to the Ohio Indians, the latter affirmed that the territory purchased at Lancaster was bounded by the westernmost ridge (Laurel Hill and Chestnut Ridge) of the Alleghenies. And it will also be seen

that the Indians who actually lived beyond the mountains thought that they ought to be consulted in the matter!

On March 18, 1749, almost three months before Céloron's expedition left Montreal for the Ohio, the grant was made by King George to the Ohio Company of Virginia for 200,000 acres of land on the south side of the Ohio River and between the Monongahela and Great Kanawha rivers. As a preliminary step, the Ohio Company built a storehouse during the year following on the upper Potomac, where Cumberland, Maryland, now stands, at the mouth of Will's Creek. Here an old trail of buffalo and Indian left the Potomac and crossed the mountains to the tributaries of the Ohio River, passing near the present site of Pittsburg. This was Virginia's avenue of approach to the West—the most historic path from the Atlantic seaboard to the Middle West. In the year following the Ohio Company engaged the veteran woodsman and surveyor, Christopher Gist, whose home was near Daniel Boone's home on the Yadkin River on the far frontier of North Carolina, to go to the Ohio Valley and make a report concerning the fertility of the country from its head-waters as far down-stream as "the Falls," or the present site of Louisville.

When you find a large quantity of good, level Land [read Gist's instructions], such as you think will suit the Company, You are to measure the Breadth of it, in three or four different Places, & take the Courses of the River & Mountains on which it binds in Order to judge the Quantity: You are to fix the Beginning & Bounds in such a Manner that they may be easily found again by your Description; the nearer in [toward Virginia] the Land lies the better, provided it be good & level, but we had

rather go quite down [to] the Mississippi than take mean broken Land.

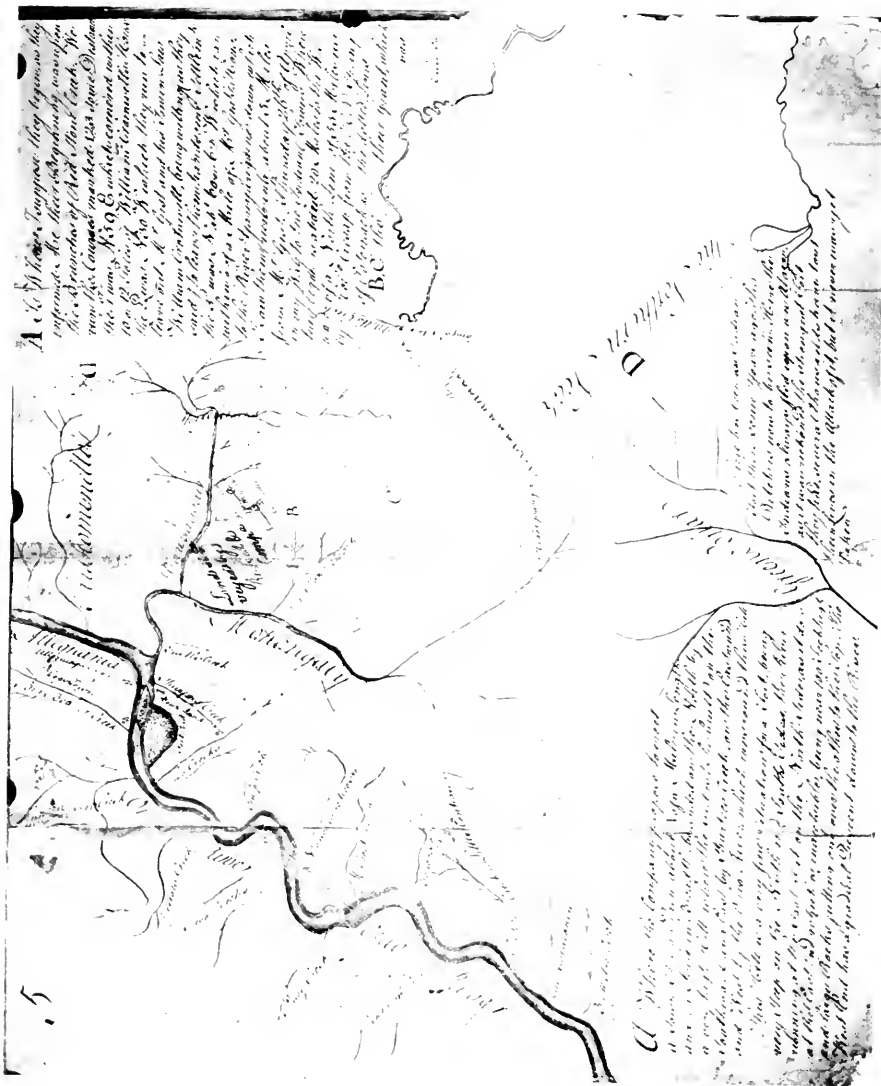
Thus it is clear that the Ohio Company was not, in reality, limited to the boundaries mentioned—the Monongahela, Kanawha, and Ohio rivers.

Christopher Gist's *Journal* of his tour of exploration for the Ohio Company is the second earliest authoritative record that comes down to us of the old Ohio River. Gist, too, was accustomed to the wildness of the western forests and the dark rivers which ran through them, and as a result the great river which he now visited seemed commonplace to him and he leaves us only mere hints as to its appearance. His *Journal*, while dwelling at length on the nature of the forests and meadows through which he passed, is largely devoted, as was Céloron's, to the political crisis that was now drawing rapidly on and which was soon to end in a convulsion of war. At the end of October, 1750, Gist departed from the upper Potomac and, by a northern route, came down into the valley of the Kiskiminitas River which enters the Allegheny above Pittsburg. On the 19th of November he reached Shannopin's Town, in the suburbs of Pittsburg, where Céloron had stopped on the 7th of August the year before—when six English traders came "all trembling" before him. Gist's record for the day reads: "Set out early in the Morning the same Course (S70 W) travelled very hard about 20 M [miles] to a small Indian town of the Delawares called Shannopin on the S E side of the River Ohio, where We rested and got Corn for our Horses." Though Gist was in what is now the Twelfth Ward of the city of Pittsburg, and within a short distance of the junction of the Monongahela and

Allegheny, yet he calls the Allegheny the "River Ohio"; this shows that, among the English as well as among the French, the Allegheny and Ohio were considered one and the same stream in 1750.

At this point Gist took the width of the Ohio (Allegheny) and gives it as "76 Poles"—1254 feet. Here he crossed the river and passing down on the other bank says "At a Distance from the River [is] good Land for Farming," showing that the immediate shores were uninhabitable. Gist passed on to Logstown and the mouth of Big Beaver River; thence he struck inland towards the Delaware towns on the Muskingum, whither, he learned, George Croghan, Deputy Agent of Indian Affairs of Pennsylvania, and his assistant Montour, had gone the week before. Croghan, like Gist, was busy conciliating the Ohio Indians to the English cause, though it was found that many redskins were inviolably attached to the French. Since reaching the Ohio Gist had been compelled to hide his compass and note-book and pretend that his mission was purely conciliatory and had no reference to lands!

From the Muskingum Gist passed with Croghan through what is now central Ohio to the Scioto River, down which he passed to its mouth on the Ohio to what he calls "Shannoah Town," the chief town of the Shawanese, which Céloron visited August 22-26 the year previous. This town "is situate," records Gist, "upon both Sides of the River Ohio, just below the Mouth of Sciodee [Scioto] Creek, and contains about 300 Men, there are about 40 Houses on the S Side of the River and about 100 on the N Side, with a kind of State-House of about 90 feet long with a light



An Early, if not the Earliest, English Map of the Ohio River, Made for the Ohio Company about 1752.

From a photograph of the original in the British Public Record Office.

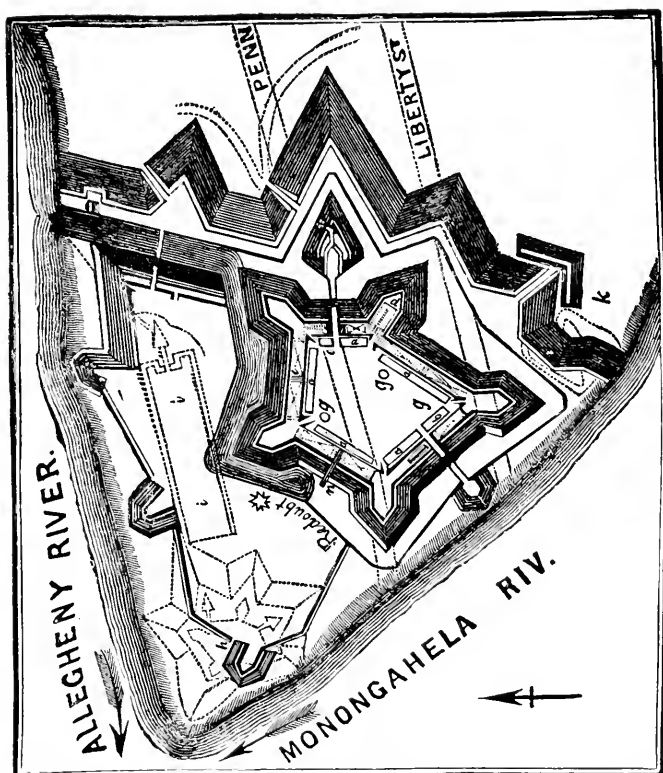




Cover of Bark in wch they hold their Councils." Thus, it is seen, an exception must be made to our former statement that there were no Indian villages on the south or Kentucky side of the Ohio River, though the tendency of this exception is to "prove the rule." As will be seen later, these towns were soon abandoned, but at the middle of the eighteenth century they were probably the most important villages on the entire Ohio River, occupying the present site of Portsmouth and Alexandria, Ohio, and Springville, Kentucky. The Shawanese here were found to be favorable to the English, and Gist and Croghan proceeded to strengthen the hold already acquired. From this point Gist made a long tour to northwestern Ohio to the chief town of the Miami nation at Laramie's, near Lima, Ohio, who were also found in the English interests and likewise encouraged to withstand the blandishments of the French at the nearby Fort Miami on the present site of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

By the beginning of spring Gist returned to the Ohio at the mouth of the Scioto, and was ready to extend his tour. Crossing the Ohio from there, he proceeded down the Ohio to near the present site of Louisville. The report of a party of "French Indians" warned him away from "the Falls," which he desired much to see; he turned to the southeast, however, and, barely touching the eastern extremity of the famous Blue Grass region, he toiled onward through the mountainous portion of Kentucky and passed into Virginia by way of Pound Gap. The best land Gist visited (having practically missed the beautiful meadow-lands of Kentucky) was in central Ohio along and between the Muskingum, Licking, Scioto, and

Miami rivers. But the result of his tour would have been the same in any case—for the war for the possession of the Ohio Valley was soon to be precipitated, bringing to an end, for the time-being, all hopes entertained by the promoters of the Ohio Company.



Plan of Fort Pitt.

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## Chapter III

### Old French War in the West

THE report which Céloron made to his Governor at Montreal was most alarming; it was plain that the traders of the Ohio Company and others were alienating a considerable portion of the western savages; a price was set on the heads of Croghan and Montour, dead or alive, and measures were immediately set on foot to fortify the Ohio Valley. And so, early in 1753, colonial rangers in northern New York saw a flotilla of canoes pass Oswego sailing westward; a scouting party was sent overland to spy on the little fleet. Passing the portage at Niagara the canoes coasted along the shores of Lake Erie and landed at what is now Portland, New York, at the northern end of the hard portage to Lake Chatauqua, just where Céloron had landed when going to La Belle Rivière. The spies who were watching the movement of the French party, which numbered about three hundred men, affirmed that a dispute arose among the French officers here and that in a few days the whole fleet put to sea again and proceeded farther west. The English spies followed. Arriving at last at a promontory which jutted out far into the lake the French again landed. The promontory was so nearly an island that the French called the place *Presqu' Isle*, "almost

an island"; this is the present site of Erie, Pennsylvania. Here the soldiers were seen to set to work diligently in building a fort which they named Fort Presqu' Isle.

The English spies hurried a messenger back to Oswego with the news that the French were building a fort on Lake Erie; and, soon after, they sent the additional intelligence that the enemy was building a roadway twenty miles long straight south from Presqu' Isle to Rivière au Bœufs, the tributary of the Allegheny River which we call French Creek to-day. It was now plain to the blindest that the French had given up the hard Lake Chatauqua route from the lakes to the Ohio and were opening and fortifying the easier route by way of "the river of the buffaloes," Rivière au Bœufs. And at the end of the twenty-mile road a new fort, Fort La Bœuf, was being built on the river of that name, where Watertown, Pennsylvania, now stands.

These reports of the spies spread rapidly through the colonies during the summer of 1753, bringing consternation to every provincial governor. The French were, evidently, tremendously in earnest in their claim to the Ohio Valley! Of them all, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia and his advisers were most alarmed, and they began at once to take measures to meet the ominous crisis. First, a strong protest should be made and the French formally asked to retire from English territory; if this failed a resort to arms would be necessary. Virginia's activity in the matter of the control of the Ohio is in marked contrast to Pennsylvania's lethargy; in 1750, as we have seen, Croghan was on the Ohio with Gist taking

the temperature of the Indians. On his return he advocated the erection of the fort on the Ohio at Pittsburg and had been so successful as to secure all really necessary permission from the Indians; but Pennsylvania, fearing Indian opposition, ignored the golden opportunity. It is in place here to emphasize strongly the fact of Virginia's zeal in the opening of the Ohio Basin as indicated, first, by the formation of the Ohio Company, and now, secondly, by opposing the armed advance of the French.

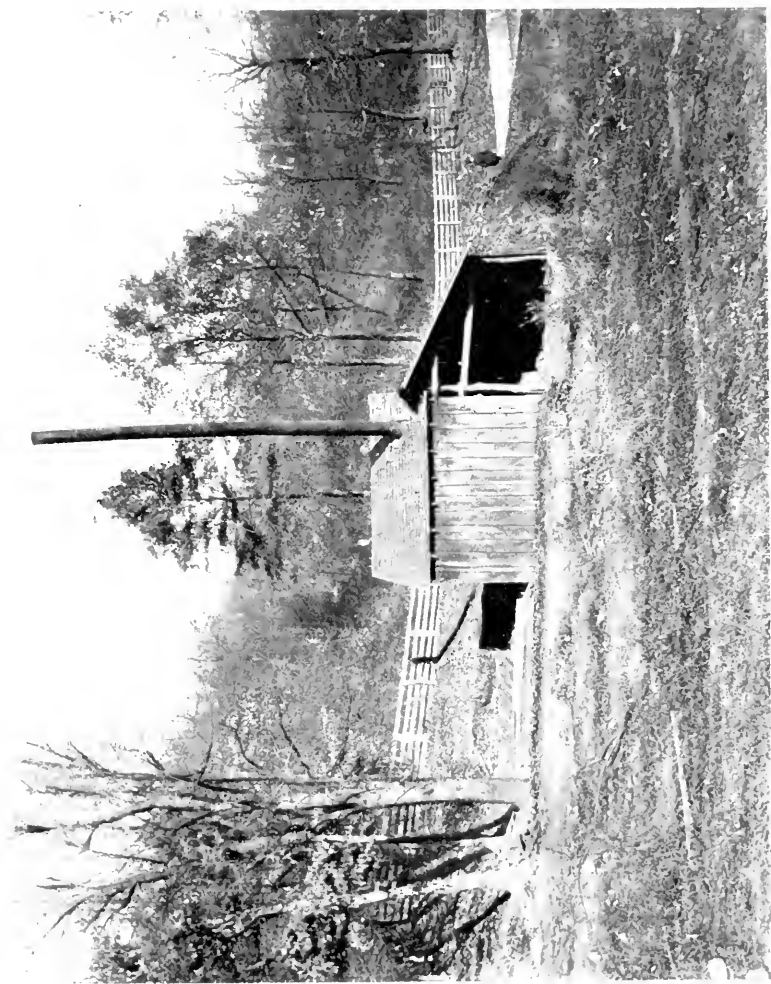
Governor Dinwiddie at once began to cast about for a proper person to carry a formal protest to the French at Forts La Bœuf and Presqu' Isle. It is little wonder that several refused to consider the dangerous journey through four hundred odd miles of almost impassable forest; not a step would be taken free of the danger of receiving the contents of a French Indian's rifle. Such was the task which Providence ordained should show to the world the fearlessness and calm persistency of its favored son, George Washington, then an obscure major of Virginia militia. Probably through the suggestion of his patron, Lord Fairfax, Washington was given the mission, and, with the tried Christopher Gist as guide, he left Williamsburgh, Virginia, October 30, 1753.

"Faith, you're a brave lad," said Dinwiddie, as Washington took leave of him, "and, if you play your cards well, you shall have no cause to repent your bargain." The Ohio Company had, in the year before, through the agency of the trained woodsman Colonel Thomas Cresap, engaged a Delaware Indian, Nemacolin, to blaze the pathway from the Potomac at Will's Creek to the Monongahela tributary of the

Ohio, at the point where Brownsville, Pennsylvania, stands. The main trail traversed Laurel Hill and went to Shannopin's Town (Pittsburg); a branch left the main trail at what is now Mount Braddock and ran to Brownsville or Redstone Old Fort as the point was known in pioneer days; the Ohio Company soon erected another storehouse, or "fort," here at the mouth of Redstone Creek; this was the first building erected by Englishmen in the Ohio Basin. Washington and Gist passed over the main trail to Shannopin's Town, not traversing the branch trail from Mount Braddock to the storehouse at the mouth of Redstone Creek.

They did not go far before news from the Allegheny reached them. Near the present site of Braddock, Pennsylvania, on the Monongahela, they were entertained by a German trader, Frazier, who had lived on the Allegheny River where Franklin, Pennsylvania, stands, and who had been sent away from the place by the French that very summer—his house being occupied by the enemy until they could build a fort there. From Frazier the travellers probably heard the French title read pretty clear in robust German oaths. From this point they descended the Monongahela to the strategic point of land between the Allegheny and Monongahela; in his *Journal* of his trip, which is another of the earliest records we have of any Englishman on the Ohio, Washington correctly prophesied that "the point" (Pittsburg) would be of great military and commercial importance. It is singularly interesting that the very first description on record of the exact site of Pittsburg should have been in the handwriting of George Washington. From here the





Pumping Station on the Site of Dunbar's Camp on Braddock's Road.

100

travellers passed down to Logstown where they met Half King, a Delaware chieftain, loyal to the English, who had just returned from the French fort on the Allegheny where he had gone to lodge a protest against the French advance. The dying Marin, the French officer in command, had spurned Half King from his presence, saying that the Indians did not own the land on the Ohio or any part of it—not even the dirt under their finger-nails!

With such ominous warnings of the determination of the enemy, Washington and Gist set out with Half King for French Creek, November 30th; arriving at Frazier's cabin, at the mouth of that creek, they were not inhospitably entertained by the French agent, Joncaire; but when the wine had mounted to his head he talked as fiercely as Marin had talked to Half King.

They told me [wrote Washington] that it was their absolute Design to take Possession of the *Ohio*, and by G— they would do it; for that although they were sensible the *English* could raise two Men for their one; yet they knew, their Motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any Undertaking of theirs.

Joncaire craftily made Washington's Indians, including Half King, too drunk to proceed immediately to Fort La Bœuf enabling his own runners to reach the fort and give word of the coming of the English "spies"—for such Washington and Gist really were. But on December 11th the travellers reached the fort, on the present site of Watertown, Pennsylvania, and were courteously received by the one-eyed veteran Legardeur de St. Pierre, who had succeeded the dead Marin. To him Washington handed a message from the Governor of Virginia which stated that it was

a Matter of equal Concern and Surprize . . . to hear that a Body of French Forces are erecting Fortresses, and making Settlements upon . . . [the Ohio] River [which was] so notoriously known to be the Property of the Crown of *Great Britain*. . . . it becomes my Duty [added Governor Dinwiddie] to require your peaceable Departure; and that you would forbear prosecuting a Purpose so interruptive of the Harmony and good Understanding, which his Majesty is desirous to continue and cultivate with the most Christian King [of France].

By the middle of December Washington and Gist were setting out homeward with St. Pierre's reply to Governor Dinwiddie; as was to be expected they were partially led into a trap by a treacherous guide, and but for a French Indian's gun missing fire Washington would probably have been buried in the snow-drifted Alleghenies at this time. On the first day of the new year, 1754, they were taking their departure a second time from Frazier's cabin on the Monongahela, and on January 16th Washington, pale and worn, rode into Williamsburgh, the capital of Virginia. St. Pierre's reply was all that could have been expected from a brave under-officer:

As to the Summons [he wrote] you send [asking] me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey it. What-ever may be your Instructions, I am here by Virtue of the Orders of my General; and I intreat you, Sir, not to doubt, one Moment, but that I am determined to conform myself to them with all the Exactness and Resolution which can be expected from the best Officer. I don't know that in the Progress of this Campaign any Thing passed which can be reputed an Act of Hostility, or that is contrary to the Treaties, which subsist between the two Crowns. . . . Had you been pleased, Sir, to have descended to particularize the Facts which occasioned your Complaint, I should have had the Honour of answering you in the fullest, and, I am persuaded, most satisfactory Manner.

Governor Dinwiddie had anticipated the burden of the French reply, if not its rich sarcasm; for when Washington was between Frazier's cabin and Will's Creek he met a party with seventeen horses laden with materials and stores "for a fort," he wrote in his *Journal*, "at the Fork of the *Ohio*." If Washington was correct (of which there is little doubt) these were packhorses transferring westward the materials with which Captain William Trent was to erect a fort on the present site of Pittsburg; this officer had been ordered by Dinwiddie to raise a company of men and proceed at once to the Ohio. Trent arrived at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela February 17, 1754, and he proceeded instantly to carry out his orders; in the following thirty days he erected the first military work raised by white man on what we now call the Ohio River, on the site of historic Fort Duquesne. The work came to a sudden pause when, on April 16th, a messenger from the French officer, Contrecoeur, then descending the Allegheny with a thousand men and eighteen pieces of artillery in a fleet of three hundred and sixty canoes and batteaux, brought a haughty challenge to the English right to build the half-finished fort.

Nothing can surprise me more [the message to Trent began] than to see you attempt a settlement upon the lands of the King, my Master; which obliges me now, Sir, . . . to know of you . . . by virtue of what authority you are come to fortify yourself . . . Let it be as it will, Sir, . . . I summon you in the name of the King, my Master, . . . to retreat peaceably with your troops from off the lands of the King. . . . In that case, Sir, you may be persuaded that I will give orders that there shall be no damage done by my detachment.

In the temporary absence of Captain Trent, Ensign Ward received the communication and replied that he would depart with his party, which numbered forty-two men.

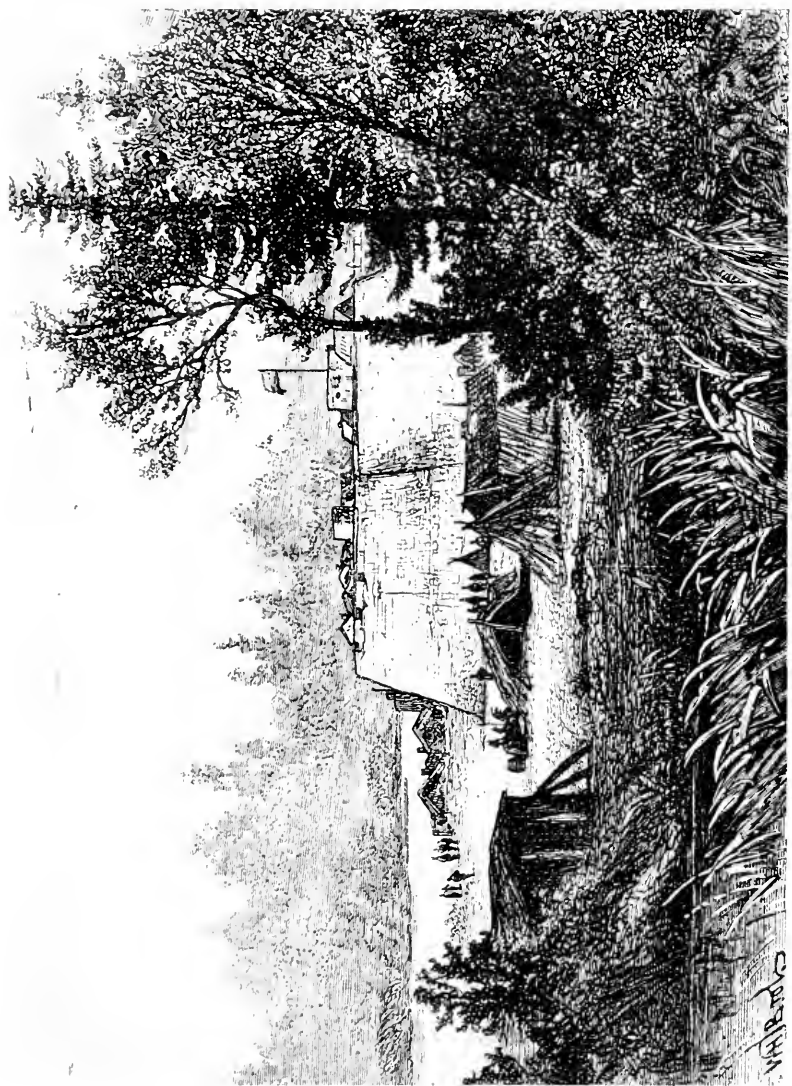
On the slight beginnings made by this English company the French under Contrecoeur erected Fort Duquesne in 1754, named in honor of the Governor of New France.

Fort Duquesne [wrote a French soldier, Thomas Forbes] is built of square Logs transversely placed as is frequent in Mill Dams, and the Interstices filled up with Earth; the length of these Logs is about sixteen Feet which is the thickness of the Rampart. There is a Parapet raised on the Rampart of Logs, and the length of the Curtains is about 30 feet, and the Demi-gorge [half of the vacant space or entrance into a bastion] of the Bastions about eighty. The Fort is surrounded on the two sides that do not front the Water [rivers] with a Ditch about 12 feet wide and very deep, because there being no covert way the Musquetteers fire from thence having a Glacis before them.<sup>1</sup>

Steps were immediately being taken in Virginia to man and hold the forts Trent was to build, and in March Colonel Joshua Fry was ordered from Alexandria to Will's Creek, with troops then being raised by Major Washington, and thence to the Monongahela.

When arrived there [his orders read], You are to make Choice of the best Place to erect a Fort for mounting y'r Cannon and ascertain'g His M'y the King of G. B.'s undoubt'd right to those Lands. My Orders to You is to be on the Defensive and if any foreign Force sh'd come to annoy You . . . You are in that Case to represent to them the Powers and Orders You have from me, and I desire they w'd immediately retire and not to prevent You in the discharge of your Duty. If they sh'd con-

<sup>1</sup> *Frontier Forts of Pennsylvania*, ii., 44.



Fort Duquesne, afterwards Fort Pitt and Pittsburgh.  
From an old print.

*[Faint handwritten notes]*



tinue to be obstinate after your desire [order] to retire, you are then to repel Force by Force.

Washington had been finding it difficult to raise men; as in the other colonies, so in Virginia, the common people were not enthusiastic over the quarrel about the possession of the Ohio Valley; lands there were being given away only to favorites, like Governor Johnson of Maryland, and to men "with a pull," as we say—like the members of the Ohio Company. As a result Governor Dinwiddie was compelled to issue a proclamation granting two hundred thousand acres of land on the Ohio to the officers and men who would now go and fight England's battle for that country beyond the mountains.

This had an effect, and by April 20th Washington reached Will's Creek with three companies; nine more came later. On April 27th the young commander received word of the arrival at Fort Duquesne of Contrecoeur; hurrying a letter off to the Governor he got his troops in motion, and set out for the Ohio as an advance guard of the army which was to follow under Colonel Fry. It was found difficult to open a road on Nemacolin's path wide enough to allow the passage of the swivel guns, and the rate of progress was slow; on the 20th of May the vanguard was at the crossing-place of the Youghiogheny with Washington testing the river to see if it were practicable to go from there by boat to the Ohio. This proved impossible because of the rapids, and the march was again resumed on the Indian trail; on the 24th of May Washington arrived at the Great Meadows, the one open spot in the forests between the Potomac and the Ohio. The sunny fields, some two miles long and

half a mile wide, were watered by Great Meadow Brook; here the tired men were glad to rest.

They needed rest because of the labors they had undergone—and the terrible struggles to be endured. Contrecoeur, at his fort, learned through his Indian spies of Washington's advance, and immediately ordered out a scouting party of thirty-four men to reconnoitre. This band, under the leadership of Sieur Jumonville, hastened toward Great Meadows and erected a little hut in a deep valley under Laurel Mountain, less than a dozen miles from Great Meadows, as a hiding-place and rendezvous. The faithful Half King sent word of this to Washington; it arrived at eight o'clock in the evening of May 27th. Instantly the young Major summoned a handful of his force and started on a night march for the French covert; and as dawn was breaking Washington gave the command to fire from the rocks above their hut. Jumonville was killed with nine of his followers; twenty-one Frenchmen were taken prisoners. One escaped to Fort Duquesne with the alarming news.

Thus opened the war by which England at last won the Ohio Basin from France—far up in the mountain fogs near the head-springs of the Youghioghenny River in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, about seven miles from Uniontown. A little mound of stones still marks what is known as "Jumonville's Grave," and about it the explorer who has struggled through the dense undergrowth of the forest from Dunbar's Spring, half a mile away, will see the rude wooden crosses, made of fence rails or broken boughs, that previous visitors have reverently erected above the lonely grave, but which the mountain winds have as often

thrown down. Impulsively you raise one of these above the pile of stones; the next wind-rack will tear it down, but another pilgrim will raise it again instinctively—a cross throws no shadow in the dense shade of laurel and tan-bark.

Upon his return to Great Meadows Washington immediately prepared to continue his advance to the Monongahela River; indeed he did proceed as far as Gist's plantation on Mount Braddock but while here his spies informed him that Contrecoeur was sending a formidable army against the Virginia provincials. This army was ascending the Monongahela to the storehouse at the mouth of Redstone Creek—the very point Washington intended to occupy and fortify. The Virginians were compelled to withdraw from before the more powerful force led by *Le Grand Villiers*, as the French Indians knew him. The situation soon became desperate; Washington's provisions had not arrived from Will's Creek, and when he reached Great Meadows he found that none had arrived there; Colonel Fry had been thrown from his horse and killed near Will's Creek, and no more of the "army" had yet started westward save one small company which was now at the Meadows. Thus with about three hundred men, almost destitute of provisions, Washington had been left to his fate—and a French army of superior numbers was coming straight to the English camp, according to the daily reports of the hurrying spies.

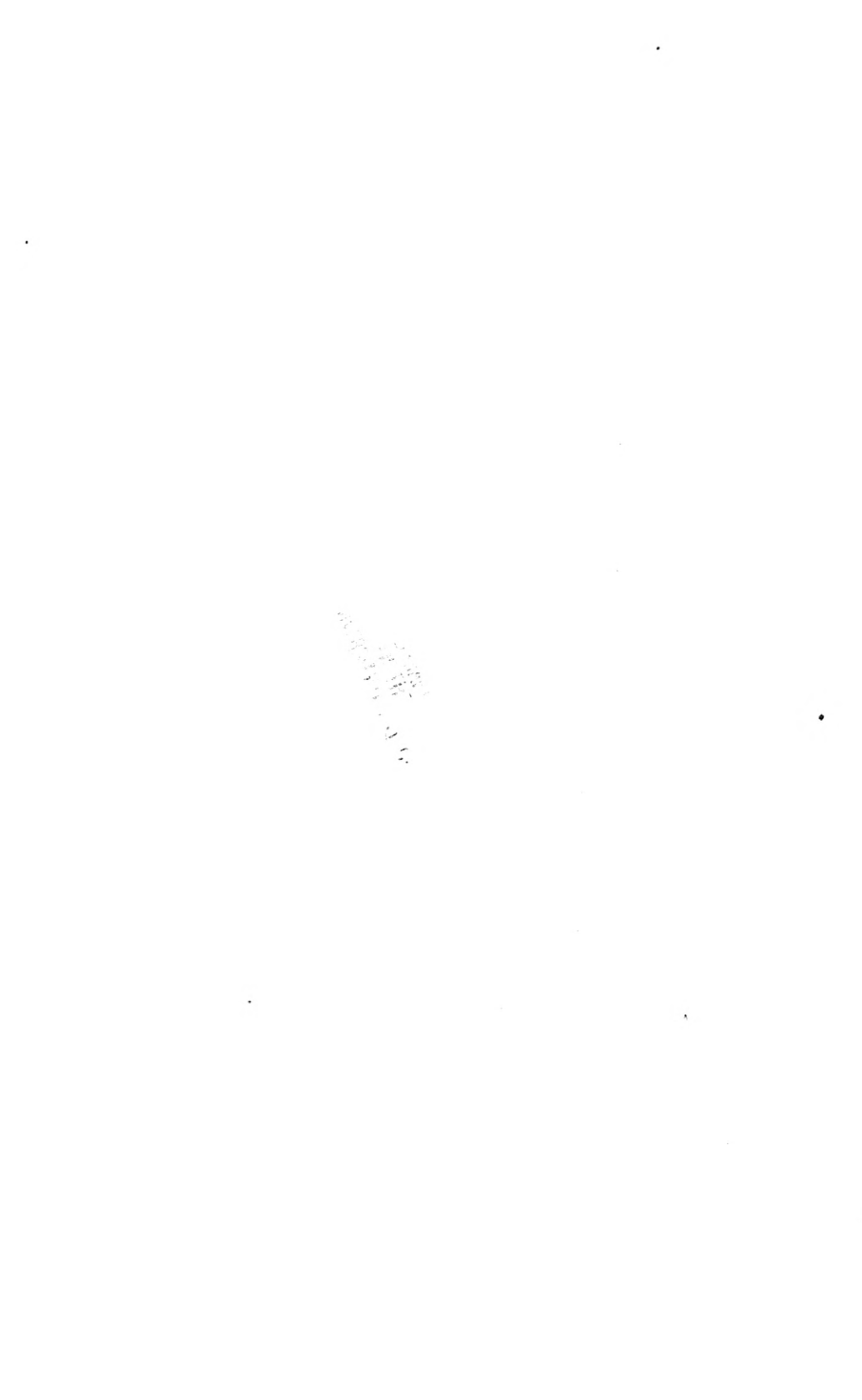
The battle at Fort Necessity is an old story often told; the fort was well-named, since the troops had no food to give them strength to move from the Meadows; they could only crouch in their trenches and fight under the artificial stimulation of liquor. Villiers and his

French and Indians covered the northern hillsides on the 2d of July and then swept around to the southern heights which approached more closely to the little quarter of an acre in the lowlands, where, in a hastily raised "fort" composed of four palisaded embankments reinforced by two advance rifle-pits, the English fought throughout the dismal, rainy 3d of July. The capitulation followed in the night, and on July 4th the Virginians were allowed to move away towards Will's Creek with the honors of war. Fifty-four had been killed or wounded, and another of the remotest tributaries of the Monongahela had quenched the thirst and bathed the wounds of soldiers fighting for the conquest of the Ohio River.

Washington's reverse, however, so far from putting an end to English hopes of conquering the West, set the mother-country and the colonies fully on fire to fight France to the bitter end. The Duke of Cumberland was charged to plan a grand American campaign for the year of 1755; it was divided into three parts; Sir William Johnson was to strike at Fort Crown Point, General Shirley at Fort Niagara, and General Edward Braddock was called from Gibraltar to wrest Fort Duquesne from the enemy. Braddock was the protégé of the Duke of Cumberland, well-trained in the art of war as practised on European fields and brave enough to lead where any man would dare to follow. In temperament and disposition he was no better than the average licentious army libertine. A large part of his resources and supplies was to come from the coffers of the provinces in which he was ordered to operate, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Half of his troops were to be militia-



“Jumonville's Grave.”



men from the same provinces—those that he brought with him from England and Ireland, numbering perhaps a thousand men, were as poor a class of soldiery as could have sailed from Europe to America. The fleet dropped anchor at Alexandria, Virginia, the middle of March and Braddock was immediately engaged in the details of his perplexing situation.

Few if any of the orders sent to the colonies concerning Braddock's expedition had been fully obeyed; most of them had been entirely neglected. Nowhere, as we have hinted, was there any popular feeling in the matter of ousting the French from the Ohio; and the assemblies of the various colonies were truly representative of the people who elected them. Pennsylvania was entirely apathetic, and what soldiers she had yearning to go on the war-path had gone northward to serve with Johnson or Shirley. Very little money was forthcoming for Braddock's strong box; commands sent concerning roadbuilding read as though the roads were to be built through an English park instead of across the dark and tangled Alleghenies; and chief among this tragedy of errors was the sending of Braddock to Virginia where horses and wagons and wheat were little known, when all were comparatively plentiful in Pennsylvania, the "granary of America." Moreover, by this time the western Indians had, through the blandishments and success of the French and the wanton carelessness of the colonies most concerned, become altogether alienated from England. The faithful Half King had died the fall before at John Harris's on the Susquehanna (Harrisburg), and no one took his place to hold his warriors loyal. In vain did the blustering,

egotistical Braddock dash about Virginia in his lumbering coach; in vain did he appeal by letter to those from whom he had a right to expect help; there was no help, and as the army straggled by various routes up the Potomac to Will's Creek there was only a mere hope of success in Braddock's heart and that hope burned all too dim, and with good reason.

Considering all the conditions Braddock was the unhappiest choice for commander that could have been made and every untoward circumstance tended to make him the more unfit. Wolfish contractors deceived and cheated him—rendering him furiously angry beyond hope of conciliation; well-meaning governors, helpless in the face of public indifference, made promises they could not keep—embittering Braddock against them as well as against the people whom he should have aroused from their lethargy. Properly supported and seconded, Braddock would have won lasting fame; his faults were incidental, not vital. As it was, his campaign stands the most spectacular tragedy in American history and its leader is remembered only as a bigoted braggart.

The story of the march and defeat of this English and provincial army is too well known to need full explanation here in a history of the Ohio River. In reality its effect on the history of that river was imperceptible; its tragic elements give it a seeming importance, whereas it had almost none.

Fort Cumberland had been erected in the fall and winter of 1754-5 at Will's Creek, on the present site of Cumberland, Maryland. Here Braddock's army of about two thousand men lay preparing to march



westward about the first of June. Sir Peter Halket moved off on the 7th with a brigade composed of the 44th Regiment, two Independent Companies of New York, two companies of Virginia Rangers, and one of Maryland Rangers, nine hundred and eighty-four men; on the 9th Colonel Dunbar advanced with the 48th Regiment, a company of carpenters, three companies of Virginia Rangers and one each from North and South Carolina, nine hundred and ninety-three men; on the 10th Braddock and aides followed with a bodyguard of over two hundred, making the total force approximate twenty-two hundred men, not including six hundred pioneers who had advanced previously to open historic "Braddock's Road" along Nemacolin's path. The route was, in general, that of the old National Road from Cumberland to Frostburg, Maryland, Smithfield and Farmington, Pennsylvania; on the summit of Laurel Hill, Braddock's Road turned northward toward Mount Braddock, Connellsville, and Pittsburg.

There was hardly any question of Braddock's success, despite the tremendous handicaps under which he had struggled, if he could once get to Fort Duquesne. Contrecoeur knew this better than Braddock; he had no means of effectively opposing the English advance; his Indians preferred "cooking and counselling" to fighting, after all, and the needed reinforcements from Niagara with provisions had not come and could not come while the rivers were so low. This the clear-headed Washington, aide to Braddock, foresaw, and, consequently, urged the General, in view of the slow progress the army had made to Little Crossings, to divide it, and hurry on to the Ohio with

a "flying column" before the rivers afforded the French reinforcements.

Braddock took the advice and, leaving Colonel Dunbar behind with the heavy wagons, hastened forward with thirty wagons and over twelve hundred troops. Even this was sufficient for the conquest of the Ohio, and Contrecoeur made preparations for an abandonment of his position. There was little or no hope of withstanding such an army as his spies reported was en route to the Ohio; and he was also probably apprised of Governor Shirley's campaign against Niagara and knew that the attack on that fort would prevent any reinforcements being sent southward; he likewise saw that the capture of Niagara would completely cut him off from his source of supplies. An honorable capitulation was the best that could be expected from the bulldog Braddock, who had overcome a thousand difficulties and was now, on the eighth of July, encamped within eighteen miles of the Ohio.

But an impulsive, hotheaded French captain of Contrecoeur's—Beaujeu by name—conceived a plan of opposing Braddock at the Monongahela River, which the English must cross next day at Frazier's new cabin on the present site of Braddock, Pennsylvania; Contrecoeur acquiesced in the wild scheme on the theory that it might delay the capitulation—and the hoped-for reinforcements from the north might possibly arrive in the meantime. Beaujeu had gone out on the Indian trail to Frazier's and studied the ground carefully. As it left the river the pathway mounted the "second bottom" on the eastern shore on a ridge which was paralleled by two thick ravines, and on the left (looking from the river) a slight hill



The Site of "Fort Necessity" in Great Meadows.



A Present-Day View on Braddock's Road.



arose beyond the ravine. The French captain probably saw that he could annoy the English at the fording place and then retire with his Canadians and Indians to these ravines. If the English marched on the trail (as they were almost sure to do) they would be caught fairly between these depressions, from which the unseen rifles of his men could give them a most withering fire.

The fatal ninth of July dawned bright and clear; the English moved in battle array down Turtle Creek and crossed the Monongahela, following the Indian trail; descending that river they came to the second ford at Frazier's cabin; all was well and the road-makers crossed at the ford and began clearing the trail along the ridge beyond the river. Beaujeu was too late! The French Indians were not easily to be engaged against such an army as Braddock's. It was only at the very last minute that, with a theatrical gesture which was electrifying, he had shouted that he would attack the English alone; the savage lust for battle was awakened; an English prisoner at the fort affirmed that the scene which followed was quite indescribable; liquor and powder and bullets were poured out in lavish quantities, and Beaujeu and his savage beasts sped down the trail hot for the contest. They numbered, at the outside, six hundred rifles—most of them in the hands of savages. It must have been the wildest sight ever seen in the West, save one.

Just as the English pioneers had reached the ridge and were opening the road along its summit, Beaujeu bounded into sight on the narrow trail ahead. For a moment the daring man paused, baffled. Then, with a sudden wave of his hand, the wild rabble behind

him dropped instantly into the ravines on each side of the trail. The advance guard of the English, who were acting as a guard to the pioneers, excitedly fired at the disappearing enemy far in the distance—utterly throwing away their ammunition. The entire army was now over the river, the larger part being on the “first bottom”; hearing the scattering fire Braddock at once ordered up a strong support to the vanguard under Burton. The troops advanced with precision along the ridge toward the front. At the same time the French and Indians were struggling through the thick undergrowth of the ravines, passing the pioneers and vanguard above them until the two opposing forces were almost opposite each other, the one on the high ground, the other hidden in the ravines on either side. The English passed on believing the foe was in front; the Indians and French passed forward knowing that their enemy was above and between them. Those in the low ground could see those above them; those on the ridge could not see the rifles in the thick undergrowth of the ravines. Thus the fatal position of the battle was quickly assumed. The Indians wormed their way to the brink of the ravines where they could see the redcoats huddled together in the twelve-foot aisle of a road; the most careless marksman among them could not miss his aim there; and almost every bullet found the man it was sent to find.

The French who had taken the left-hand (eastern) ravine divided, a part climbing up the slight hill, from which they had a plain view of the roadway and were in a position where they could fire over their comrades secreted in the ravine below them. Thus at this point the French brought to bear not only the

rifles in each ravine but also those on the hillside beyond the eastern ravine.

In vain the desperate Braddock ordered forward company after company; in vain did the colonials, accustomed to border warfare, take to the trees (heedless of Braddock's alleged rebukes)—for no side of a tree, but the inside, was safe from rifles located on either hand—and the colonials lost as heavily or more so than the British regulars. In vain did the English charge into the low ground; the enemy ran helter-skelter from before them—and then cautiously returned to deliver a telling fire upon the retiring troops. To advance straight through the murderous trap in which he had lunged heavily, or to retreat from its jaws, was Braddock's only hope of victory; and either plan would have resulted in victory. But the troops could not be pushed beyond that terrible blood-red vortex, where the French and Indian bullets from the two ravines and the hill to the right wrought such frightful carnage—and Braddock was too brave and too dull a man to cry "retreat" until a French bullet drove the ignominious word from his bleeding lungs. Fourteen captains out of twenty-one were killed and wounded; eight ensigns out of fourteen were killed or wounded; thirty-seven sergeants out of fifty-eight were killed or wounded; eight of the eighteen gunners were dead and six were wounded; three hundred and twenty-eight of the twelve hundred privates were wounded and fifty-eight more were killed than were wounded. Probably not more than thirty Canadians and Indians were killed and wounded all told—the dare-devil Beaujeu being one of the very first to fall.

Yet his temporizing ambushade had resulted in a most bewildering victory. The English army fled back across the ford and headlong upon Colonel Dunbar, who by this time had reached "Dunbar's Spring" on Laurel Hill, not half a mile from Jumonville's grave. This portion of the army was panic-stricken and the large desertions made it impossible for Dunbar to think of advancing. Accordingly the entire force went backward to Fort Cumberland and Virginia, burying poor Braddock, who lived three days, near what is now Braddock's Run, a mile from Chalk Hill, Fayette County, Pennsylvania. And the English prisoner at Fort Duquesne chronicled another scene,—and this was the wildest sight ever seen on the banks of the Ohio before or since,—of the returning savages drunk with blood, covered with reeking scalps, their bodies decked out with the plunder of the slain. Of the massacring of the prisoners, what words can depict the awful finale to the Braddock tragedy!

For three long years Fort Duquesne remained in the possession of the builders, and of these years we have little record. The storm-centre of the war swept to the New England region, for Shirley had failed to capture Niagara as Braddock had failed on the Ohio. In 1758, however, a great campaign much similar to that of 1755 was inaugurated by the brilliant new British Prime Minister, William Pitt. Again Ticonderoga, Niagara, and Duquesne were to be assailed. For the subjugation of the Ohio fortress Brigadier-General John Forbes was chosen, a man in every way the opposite of Edward Braddock except in bravery and dogged persistency.





The Earl of Chatham.

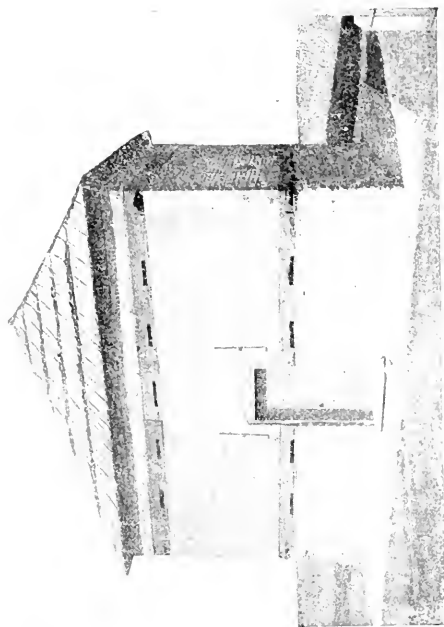
From an oil painting in the possession of the Historical Society of  
Pennsylvania.



“We shall do better another time” were Braddock’s dying words by Braddock’s Run, and the words came true. Many of the mistakes made in planning Braddock’s expedition were corrected in planning Forbes’s campaign, especially in making Pennsylvania his headquarters and rendezvous. That colony, too, awoke from its lethargy and provided men and means. Forbes at the same time took up his task, though a sick man at the very outset, with a wise consideration of the difficulties before him; he depended upon the colonial troops which Braddock had despised until too late. Forbes, too, had a very large army and also had the assistance of a brave and manly officer, Colonel Henry Bouquet, as well as that of the true and tireless Washington, and the bold Armstrong.

Marching from Philadelphia, Forbes’s entire army numbered near seven thousand men, twenty-seven hundred from Pennsylvania, sixteen hundred from Virginia and the South, twelve hundred Highlanders, and a strong Royal American regiment officered by Europeans but filled up largely with doughty Pennsylvania Dutch. The route was by way of Carlisle, Bedford, and Ligonier. It was a desperate feat to march so great an army over the Alleghenies and adequately supply it; but Forbes’s plan was equal to the occasion, and, building one fort after another, he at last reached Ligonier early in November. Four months had been spent on the way. No wonder the Indians called Forbes the “Head of Iron”! Two severe reverses here occurred; Grant was sent forward to reconnoitre the French fort with eight hundred men; exceeding his orders in a vain hope of glory he was lured into a running battle on Grant’s Hill in the

present limits of Pittsburg and terribly cut up. At Ligonier the army was savagely attacked; moreover the weather now became most unfavorable. It was determined to go into winter quarters here, but returning spies soon brought word of the hopeless state of affairs at Fort Duquesne. Forbes determined to press forward with as strong a showing as possible; he encamped on the night of November 24th on Turtle Creek during which a severe explosion was heard in the region of the fort. As the army drew near on the morrow only a column of smoke marked the site of Fort Duquesne; the large magazine had been exploded and the fort fired—and the French had fled forever from the Ohio River.



Blockhouse of Fort Pitt. Built in 1764.



## Chapter IV

### One of the Vanguard of the Pioneers

AS the Old French War drew on apace, and even while it was raging, a bold, thin line of pioneers was advancing from the seaboard into the Alleghenies. The Ohio was not the only company that had received grants of land in the West; a fine fertile region on the head tributary of the Great Kanawha, Greenbrier River, was granted to the "Greenbrier Company" in 1751; and two years before nearly a million acres were granted to a "Loyal Company" beginning on the boundary line of Virginia and North Carolina and running west and north. These grants turned people's attention thither and thousands in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas set out for the West, some for adventure, some to seek new homes for their large families, and some to speculate. The French War put an end to the land companies but not altogether to the pioneer movement.

This vanguard drifted slowly into the mountains and paused momentarily at this nest-head of rivers which arose here, flowing to the east and to the west. Two districts in particular were notable resorts for these bravest of adventurers, one at the head of the

Monongahela River, and the other at the head of the Great Kanawha River; on these finger-tips of the Ohio, the Monongahela (and its tributaries, Tygart's and the Cheat rivers) and the New River fork of the Great Kanawha, were located the first homes built in the Ohio Basin by white men other than French.

The name of the principal New River settlement was Draper's Meadows, situate in Pulaski County, now West Virginia. This smiling space of fertile meadow in the dark recesses of the mountains was settled before the middle of the eighteenth century; in 1747 the cabin of Adam Harmon was broken into by Indians and his packs of furs were stolen; this, it is affirmed, was the first depredation the Indians of the Ohio committed in the Alleghenies.

In the year 1750 the Ingles and Draper families, pioneers in the Meadows, were united by the marriage of Mary Draper and William Ingles, aged, respectively, eighteen and twenty-one. Mary Draper was a sturdy specimen of frontier girlhood—the type of womanhood which played such a conspicuous part in the settling and the holding of the Ohio Valley. “She could,” writes one of her biographers, “stand and jump straight up nearly as high as her head; she could stand on the ground beside her horse and leap into the saddle unaided.” Her husband was an equally fine type of the borderland pioneer of the day, and the new home in the Meadows was, we may suppose, as happy a reality as it always was a cherished memory; yet the mountains loomed up near by—and the times were dangerous as the French War broke out. For several years, however, the settlers on New River



were unmolested; with the hopeless ending of Washington's Fort Necessity campaign the western Indians were won to the side of the French, and then were encouraged to attack the English frontiers wherever a curl of smoke gave evidence of encroachment. Of them all the Shawanese of the Scioto were the most easily incited to plunder and pillage, and, in the year 1755, while Braddock's army was toiling onward toward Fort Duquesne, a band of Shawanese were steadily creeping up the Great Kanawha toward the flourishing Draper's Meadows settlement, containing, perhaps, six cabins with their surrounding patches of cleared land. They arrived there Sunday, the eighth of July—the day before Braddock's terrible defeat on the Monongahela.

The descent of the Scioto warriors on the pioneers was a complete and awful surprise; every member of the little company was killed, wounded, or captured. Colonel James Patton, Mrs. George Draper, Caspar Barrier, and a child of John Draper's were killed; Mrs. John Draper and James Cull were wounded and captured, together with Mrs. William Ingles, her two young sons Thomas and George, and Henry Lenard. William Ingles was in a field near by and received the first intimation of the attack from the smoke of the burning buildings; rushing toward them he was seen by the retreating savages and pursued. His one hope of being of assistance lay in his ability to give warning to other settlements, and accordingly he ran for his life and escaped through a shrewd ruse by hiding under the very noses of his pursuers who passed him; rising from his place of concealment he took a new course and escaped with his terrible cry of alarm.

The few pioneers at hand and their total lack of arms and ammunition made the quick formation of a relief party impossible, and, in the present case, delay rendered pursuit useless.

The Indians hurried down New River with their plunder and their prey; Mrs. Draper's condition was pitiful, having been shot through the arm in attempting to escape from her cabin with her baby which was killed. But if her case was sad, what of Mary Ingles? Driven from her home with two young children into the forests by murderous savages at a most critical hour of her life, her situation was such as to win the sympathy of the most heartless and make the trials endured by her fellow-sufferers seem light in comparison. On the night of the third day's journey, under a canopy of leaves near a dim fire, assisted by her brave sister-in-law, one of whose arms was tightly bandaged, the miracle was wrought. And the next morning, since the Indians did not dare to remain in camp so near the scene of their terrible attack, Mrs. Ingles and the tiny stranger of a girl were compelled to continue the wild retreat toward the Ohio River on horse.

For forty-odd miles the savages brought their captives down the eastern side of New River and then crossed to the west side at about the mouth of Indian Creek. Reaching Bluestone River they ascended it, crossed Flat Top Mountain, and descended Paint Creek to the Great Kanawha.

Some of the prisoners [writes Mr. John P. Hale, great-grandson of Mary Draper, in his *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*] were treated very roughly on the route down, and suffered very much;



Fort Harnar, about 1786



but Mrs. Ingles, owing to her delicate condition, and to her having policy and tact enough to simulate a reasonable amount of cheerfulness and contentment under all her trials, and to make herself useful in many ways, was treated with more leniency and respectful consideration than any of the others. She was permitted to ride and to carry her children. It was made one of her duties to attend to and aid her wounded sister-in-law. The Indians instructed her to bathe and poultice the broken arm with the steeped leaves of the wild comphry plant and to dress the wounds with a salve made from the comphry plant and deer fat.

At Cabin Creek, or perhaps Witcher's Creek Shoals, the party crossed to the northeast side of the Kanawha and stopped at the salt spring above the mouth of Campbell's Creek to feast on game which could be obtained there, and to make salt. Oddly enough Mrs. Ingles's grandson, Crocket Ingles, made salt within sight of this lick a century later, and her great-grandson, John P. Hale, the West Virginia historian, has "been a salt manufacturer for more than thirty years," he writes, "within a few hundred yards of where she first made salt in July, 1755." Little did this first white woman to make salt west of the Allegheny Mountains dream of the tremendous changes five-score years would bring!

From the salt springs the party proceeded at last to the "River of Many White Caps," and if we imagine Mary Ingles to be on horse, she, first of all white women, looked upon the great river of the West. As a type of the brave borderland women who played such a part in redeeming the Ohio Valley to civilization this first heroic woman to set eyes upon it deserves special mention. She had suffered patiently the most marvellous sacrifices and the most heartrending,

exhaustive pains. Yet through it all she showed a splendid patience and bravery—winning the admiration of her cruel enemies and triumphing nobly in her efforts to give cheer and hope to her companions. If the great river valley, into which the party now entered, was to be filled with women so brave, so thoughtfully tireless, as Mary Ingles, there was no doubt as to the future; the men of the valley would be fired by such examples to a patriotism and devotion the like of which had never been seen on this western continent. I would like a picture of this pale, wan, patient mother, astride a gaunt pony, bearing in her arms the infant hastened to life by the bloody murders which its mother was compelled to witness, as she looked with half hopeless eyes upon the sombre majesty of the virgin Ohio; in that picture I could read the meaning of those tears and those anxious vigils; in that picture I could find a reason for the sudden transformation of a dark wilderness into the bright and glorious life that is to-day seen along that selfsame river, as though a magician's wand had created it from the dropping petals of a buckeye blossom. If women such as this were entering the valley through those far-away finger-tips, it was of more importance than ever Céloron's leaden plates, or the echoing cry of his men-at-arms, "Vive la Roi," as they posted the King's arms to the Ohio trees; it was of more moment, even, than the marching armies of Braddock and Forbes. For the army of pioneers toiling behind the vanguard in which Mrs. Ingles stands so conspicuous was to effect a conquest greater and better than any other army could win, as if to prove that on the new continent, too, the pruning-hook and

ploughshare were more powerful weapons than the musket and broadsword.

Reaching the Ohio, the Indians followed the river downward to their towns, described by both Céloroe and Gist, at the mouth of the Scioto River. Here, in honor of the success of the marauding party, a festival was held; all the captives except Mary Ingles were compelled to "run the gauntlet," to the fiendish delight of the town. Then came the awful moment of dividing the spoils; Mrs. Ingles and infant were kept at the Shawanese town; Mrs. Draper was taken to near the present Chillicothe, on the Scioto River; Thomas Ingles, aged four, was taken to Detroit, and his brother George, aged two, was also taken into the interior, the exact point not being recorded. Left alone with her baby, the forlorn woman, first of her race to make her home on the banks of the Ohio, took up the tasks that fell to her lot with the same patient bravery she had shown from the beginning.

Shortly after this division of the prisoners [writes her great-grandson] some French traders came into the Indian town for the purpose of trading and bartering with the Indians. They had, among other things, a stock of check shirting, and as check shirts were in great demand among the Indians, and Mrs. Ingles a good sewer, she was put to making check shirts. Her proficiency in this line so increased her value and importance to them that she was treated with unusual leniency and consideration. When a shirt would be finished and delivered to its owner, the buck would stick it on the end of a pole, and run through the town exhibiting it, and singing the praises of the "heap good white squaw."

However, Mrs. Ingles was not so valuable to the Indians as a seamstress that she could be spared from

the all-important work of making salt; accordingly, with her baby, she left with the salt-making party for the Big Bone Lick in Boone County, Kentucky, one hundred and fifty miles below the Scioto and three miles back from the Ohio. This is the point where the famous mastodon bones have been found, the lick having been the resort of animals of all kinds, as well as of the Indians. How long the poor captive had been planning to effect her escape is not known, but now she determined upon that desperate adventure. The Indians brought with them an old captive Dutch woman with whom Mrs. Ingles became acquainted and to whom she divulged her secret hope of escape. The two planned together, the great difficulty being for Mrs. Ingles to decide whether to take or to leave her babe. At last she determined that for many reasons it was safer to leave it than to carry it away since there was little enough hope of the women succeeding in their attempt; if they escaped recapture they would be likely to starve or miss their way in the long journey of nearly seven hundred miles to Draper's Meadows. Few men, even, could dare that journey without food or fire-arms with which to procure it. Yet Mrs. Ingles was determined, and her companion was a willing comrade in the plan, though at first she honestly pointed out the hopelessness of the scheme and its probable termination.

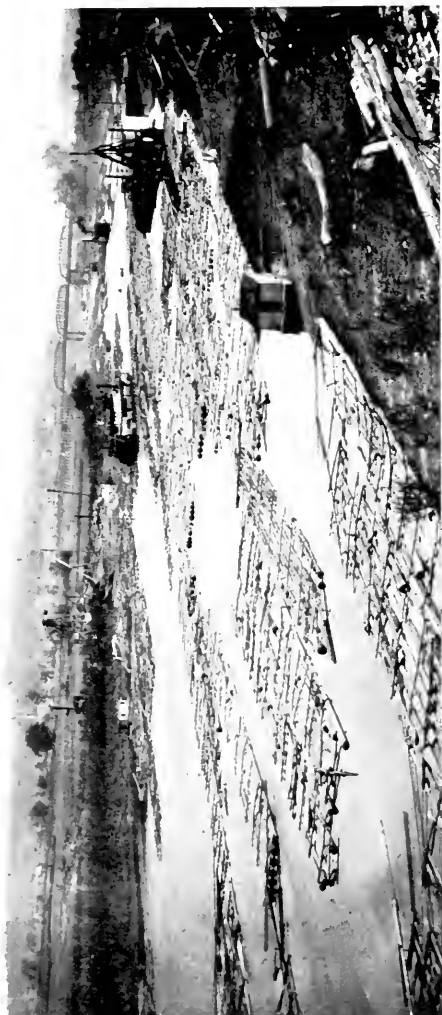
It was late one afternoon when the women slipped away from the Lick, making toward the Ohio River, which they reached and followed far into the night; each carried a blanket and a tomahawk; Mary Ingles exchanged a dull one for a sharper one with an unsuspecting Frenchman who was cracking walnuts on one



of the big mammoth bones now so famous. The Indians did not discover their absence until night and finally, after firing some guns thinking they were lost, gave them up—never dreaming that they had purposely gone away. So the very daring of the plan was in its favor and the women escaped pursuit. Then followed the long, slow journey up the river, across the tributary creeks and around the dark, loathesome piles of drift and flood-plunder that covered the banks. At times they were compelled to make long detours but they kept the river ever in sight and came to it again farther on. The danger of recapture kept them from traversing such paths as they found except at night, and, without means of securing game, they subsisted on bark, leaves, and berries; as a consequence their clothes were soon in shreds and their faces thin with hunger. At last they reached the present site of Covington, opposite Cincinnati, and crossed Licking River near its entrance into the Ohio; toiling slowly up the great lonely valley they passed the present sites of Foster, Augusta, Maysville, Concord, and Vanceburg, until they came opposite the Shawanese town at the mouth of the Scioto. The portion of the settlement which in Céloron's day lay on the Kentucky side of the Ohio had now dwindled down to a single cabin surrounded by a field of corn; almost exhausted and fearful of detection, the women lay in the cabin to rest and feast upon the corn. The next morning an old Indian pony was found in the corn-field; appropriating this animal, the women departed with renewed hope, carrying as large a load of corn as was possible; as they went they could plainly see the Indians in the

village—Mrs. Ingles's "home"—across the river, and during the day they almost ran into a party of Indians out hunting but escaped notice by hiding. The pony wore a bell on its neck which the old Dutch woman wisely removed—and which she carried throughout the remainder of the eventful journey.

The first great hardship was encountered at the Big Sandy River, now the dividing line between West Virginia and Kentucky; the river was too wide and deep to ford or swim, and a long detour was necessary up the west bank to a crossing place and back on the other side to the Ohio. The crossing was made on a great pile of driftwood which stretched from one side to the other; it was an easy bridge for the women but the old pony made a misstep and fell; its four legs went through the drift and it lay helpless on its belly, frantically pawing. Do what they could the women were unable to assist the animal, and, fearing to remain longer in such a conspicuous place, they were at last compelled to go on and abandon the poor beast to its fate. This discouraged Mrs. Ingles's companion almost beyond the endurance point, and from now on the former was compelled not only to bear her fatigue and mental distress but also the even more wearing burden of abuse from the Dutch woman for having "lured" her to her death in the forests. Yet the two toiled on; they bound strips from their dresses on their bruised feet with thongs of the leather-wood shrubs, and gathered from the dark forest about them anything that could be eaten—with almost reckless indifference as to its effect; on one occasion they found on a drift-pile a partly decomposed deer's head discarded by Indian hunters, and



Log Rafts at the Mouth of the Big Sandy.

*Submitted: 10 May 2006; Accepted: 17 July 2006*

feasted on it. Reaching, at last, the Great Kanawha, they turned from the Ohio, and began the latter portion of their terrible march. Lack of food continually turned the old Dutch woman's head and on two occasions, in a crazed condition, she viciously attacked Mrs. Ingles, who stood her off with her last grain of strength until the frenzy had passed. Journeying up the Kanawha by the present site of Charleston the two entered at last the most desperate part of all the terrible trip—the grand canyon of New River from the Gauley to the Greenbrier. By walking and climbing and creeping and crawling the two accomplished what the tourist, looking down fifteen hundred feet from his Pullman window to-day, might well consider the most marvellous of feats; at one time Mrs. Ingles in despair of her life kept her crazed companion, who was far stronger than she, from killing her only by soberly proposing to draw lots to see which should die that the other might live; the lot fell on herself, but by the time it was settled the old woman seemed to come to her senses. But additional struggles with the cliffs brought the craze upon her again and, at last, in the lonely mountain valley, the two comrades of so many hardships were clasped in a life and death struggle. Weakness, only, kept the old woman from killing Mrs. Ingles; the latter at last eluded the feeble blows and ran to a place of safety; finding, by accident, a canoe next day, she proceeded by this new and restful means of locomotion until rapids impeded her course; then she left the canoe and proceeded alone on the opposite side of the river from her demented companion. The hardest mile of the seven hundred she had traversed was the last mile of them all; reaching

the towering cliff, Anvil Rock, she sought to wade around it; failing in this she slowly dragged herself straight up over the rocks that stand two hundred and eighty feet above the river, and came down on the other side utterly exhausted into a corn-field owned and occupied by Adam Harmon; it luckily happened that the pioneer heard her call and found her insensible on the ground. Carried next day to her home, the meeting with her husband, who had only just returned from a journey to the Cherokee Indians in the hope of hearing of her through them, was more than affecting.

Nor can the story of this marvellous experience of womanly fortitude end without a happy touch of humor as well as this touch of joy; one of Mrs. Ingles's first conscious acts was to hasten off a party of pioneers in search of her unfortunate companion whose suffering had gone further beyond the point of endurance than her own. But the "old Dutch woman," as she is remembered, had also fared well since the separation; having fallen upon an abandoned hunter's cabin she had found food, an old pair of leathern riding breeches, and another "critter," or old horse. Recovering her strength and spirits in a day or two, she donned her riding habit, of which she was in need, and mounting her horse (to which she fastened the bell taken from the pony left on the dead-wood in Big Sandy), the old lady came along the mountain trail hallooing at the top of her voice. Thus she was soon found, and brought, in all her glory, to the Draper settlement. Despite their trouble, the two women met with utmost joy, realizing now what each owed the other.

Thus came and went the first white woman on the

Ohio; and though Mary Ingles has left us little information as to the appearance of the valley and its sweeping river, her experiences as a whole make it possible for us to imagine the picture more clearly perhaps than even the definitive but formal reports of Céloron and Christopher Gist. From her intensely human story as it has come down to us from her lips, we seem to know better what the primeval valley was like; we see her tangled pathway through all those hundred miles along the Ohio's southeastern shore, we feel the density of the shades and see the running rivers and the fantastic piles of driftwood strewn up and down them at the caprice of mad waters long since run to the sea.

How much and how little has been written of the western wilderness through which the Ohio flowed and in which Mary Ingles and her old comrade marched! For though here and there and everywhere the forest is mentioned, where can one turn to read a clear description of it?

What may well be called the Black Forest of America stretched from the Alleghenies to what is now central Kentucky and Indiana; a line drawn along the summit of the Laurel and Chestnut ranges of the mountains will mark, in a loose way, the eastern boundary of this great forest, and a line drawn through Lexington, Kentucky, and Indianapolis, Indiana, will not be very far from its western boundary. Speaking generally, a "great woods" lay between these limits; to the eastward the forests were, of course, very dense too, but they were broken up there by what were known as glades in which the giant trees gave way to long grasses where deer revelled and where pioneers first

settled; to the westward of the Black Forest lay the prairies, which grew more frequent and larger in dimensions as you reached the Wabash country and then the Mississippi River. Between the glades and the prairies lay this Black Forest; the Ohio River rose in the glades or "glady country," flowed through the Black Forest, and then through the prairies to the Mississippi. The Allegheny River was forest-born and forest-bred from source to mouth, but the Monongahela's waters came from the "Great Glades of the Yoh," the Sandy Creek Glades, Great and Little Meadows. Speaking loosely, the Ohio River was forest-bound from Olean, New York, and Morgantown, Pennsylvania, to about Cincinnati, Ohio; the forests were dense along the immediate river below this, but at about this point the Ohio entered that portion of the old Southwest known as the "Barrens" of Kentucky and the prairies of Indiana and Illinois. Generally speaking, the Ohio Country,<sup>1</sup> as it was known in early pioneer days, may be divided therefore into three parts, the Glades, the Black Forest, and the Prairies.

The Black Forest has most frequently been characterized as a "pathless wilderness" and a "howling wilderness"; these words probably have occurred more frequently than any others in American historical writing touching the subject of the western forest land. Both expressions are misleading if not inherently false; neither Mrs. Ingles nor any other traveller in the old Black Forest ever thought of it as a "pathless" or a "howling" wilderness. Of the prominent

<sup>1</sup> As late as the Revolutionary War the word "Ohio" was printed on *both* sides of the Ohio River on Pownall's Map and covered what is now West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.





The Ravine in which Washington's Spies Found Junonville's Camp.



characteristics of the old forest the two perhaps most conspicuous were the paths through it and the silence that reigned over it. There were probably as many paths in Ohio in 1775 (eighteen years previous to the first white settlement in the State), on which a man could travel horseback at a rate of five miles an hour, as there are railway lines in that State to-day. And, in general, where there is a railway to-day there was a path a century and a quarter ago. True, it was not "good going" over any of these "roads," but the picture usually described and drawn of pioneers cutting a way through a well-nigh impenetrable network of undergrowth is a pure figment of the imagination. In the *Diary* of the Reverend David McClure, who, in 1772, went from Pittsburg to central Ohio, we find, for instance, this interesting sentence: "The woods," he wrote one day, "were clear from underbrush, & the oaks & black walnut & other timber do not grow very compact, & there is scarcely anything to incommode a traveller in riding, almost in any direction, in the woods of the Ohio." The most impressive characteristic of the old forest was this absence of undergrowth; this could not live without sunlight, and the sunlight could not pierce through the dense overgrowth. This density of the tree tops was, also, an impressive feature of the old forests, since almost every tree was loaded with vines, especially those of the wild grape; these vines revelled in the sunshine found at the tree tops and ran riot from one tree to another binding them together with cords as strong as steel hawsers. In hundreds of cases, before the pioneers could cut down the trees, boys were sent up to cut away the vines which attached each tree

to its neighbor. All this rendered travelling in the woods far less laborious than is usually conceived. The Ohio Valley was covered with a network of deer paths, buffalo roads, and Indian trails; many of the paths and trails were "blind" (overgrown), as the pioneers said, but many were used too much to become impassable; the buffalo roads were great, wide highways over which, had they been smooth, several wagons could have proceeded abreast. Mrs. Ingles in coming up the Ohio Valley in 1755 was in danger while on the many trails which she met and followed, some of which she even abandoned for safety's sake.

It is difficult to tell just what a "howling wilderness" might be unless it be a wilderness infested by beasts that howl; wolves howled in the old Ohio Valley but the forests as a rule were marvellously silent—a silence intensified tenfold when now and then the howl of a hungry wolf broke its deathly reign. But wolves could run as well as howl; and I believe (after studying several volumes relating solely to pioneer history) that there was no more danger, so far as the animals of the Black Forest were concerned, in a journey through it a century and more ago than there is from bears and wolves now in the same region. Rattlesnakes there were and are; these being more numerous were more dangerous; a bull buffalo, it seems, would dispute the right of way on a narrow trail with the traveller. Beyond rattlesnakes and copperheads and an egotistical bull buffalo does pioneer literature show another real danger from wild animals in this howling wilderness? A wounded bear would fight but never unless wounded; you could not drag a bear's cubs from the den without an argu-



A Banquet in the Wilderness.



ment with the mother; but you might pull a wolf's whelps from the mother's side and the latter could usually be relied upon to do no more than show her teeth and snarl. Were it not for casting doubt upon another of our American legends it would be in place to refer to General Putnam here. The birds of the forest came only with the white man; the "howling wilderness" knew nothing of the chattering of these winged *habitans*, though parrots are known to have been common in Kentucky, and the vast flocks of pigeons shut out the sun when they passed and blighted the trees on which they spent a night. The bees came with man—or just slightly in advance; they were unknown in the "howling wilderness." Chattering squirrels were numerous and, later, very detrimental to pioneer corn-fields; there were no crows or blackbirds in the primeval forests to ruin the first corn-fields; wolves were exceedingly numerous but died out with inexplicable rapidity, as Dr. Dodge thought by hydrophobia; there are instances on record where pioneers were bitten by wolves suffering from rabies. Except in such an instance perhaps no one was ever harmed by a wolf except a wounded one. Young wolves were frequently carried home alive over a pioneer's shoulder. Eagles and buzzards were very common. In McClure's *Diary*, previously quoted, one or two passages concern the wild animals and game; on September 16, 1772, he writes:

I slept but little this night, being kept awake by the howling of Wolves. It was the first time I had ever heard their nightly dolorous yells. They came near our encampment; but the sight of the fire kept them off, had they been disposed to attack us.

On the day following the traveller reached the Little Beaver Creek.

In the middle of the Creek [he wrote] a small flock of wild geese were swimming, on the bank sat a large flock of Turkeys, & the wild pigeons covered one or two trees; & all being within musket shot we had our choice for a supper. My Interpreter chose the Turkeys and killed three at one shot.

Writes another early traveller:

I cannot pretend that wild turkeys differ in any striking manner from the domestic ones I have everywhere seen, except the length of their wings, their superior plumage, their attitude and lively expression in walking. . . . They are migratory. They winter to the southward and return in the spring to the deepest recesses of the woods, where they construct their nests with such care and concealment, that few instances ever occur of the eggs or young being found. Where eggs have been obtained and hatched under a domestic turkey, the young shew great disposition to thrive and remain about the house very contentedly till their first spring, when they rise, without indicating a previous talent for flying, into the air, take a few circles around the heads of their old friends and make for a wilderness whence they never more return.

Wildcats, panthers, and catamounts were known to make trouble; when very hungry they would attack a lonely traveller, though well-authenticated instances of this are very difficult to find, whereas testimony of pioneers scaring wildcats away with whips and of the unparalleled cowardice of panthers are common.

It would probably not be far from the truth, then, to say that the deadly snakes were the only occupants of the primeval forest that were distinctly dangerous. The warmth of the camp and cabin fire universally



attracted reptiles as well as that afforded even by blankets spread upon the ground. To the Indian the rattlesnake and copperhead were life-long horrors; this is emphasized by that attention given by their priests and magicians to snake charming, snake dancing, and antidotes for snake poisoning. The observant traveller, Ashe, while making an inland tour up the Muskingum River from the Ohio in 1806 describes the protection given him from snakes by his Indian guide, Cuff:

I also had to renew the fire, and suffer Cuff to perform certain rites and incantations, in the manner of his country, and which had the faculty of checking the advances of snakes. He expressed these offices by stalking several times around our tent. His gesticulation was strong and his cries horrible. He also uttered some barbarous words; described a circle on each round with the end of a stick, and after shedding certain leaves on the circle, he concluded with three more infernal yells; and then under a decided impression or strong conviction of safety, cast himself near me on his *berth*. . . . the simple action of drawing a line with a *black ash stick*, and strewing on the line some leaves of the same tree, is known to be entirely sufficient to hinder any snake from crossing the line, and to deter him from interrupting anything within side of it. So great is their terror to this timber that they are never known to inhabit where it grows; and if a branch of black ash be suddenly cast before a rattlesnake, apprehension and fear instantly seize him; his rattle ceases; his passion subsides; and, grovelling, timid, yet disquiet, he takes a large circuit to pass the branch, or more probably, entirely retires. . . . When the priests' [sorcerers'] hands and bodies are washed in a decoction of the black ash leaves or trunk, the snakes will wreathe about them in a kind of suffering and terror, but never attempt to bite. . . . the stick and leaves employed by Cuff were of the black ash, which he purposely brought out of the low woods for our protection.

If any reader of this volume can cite an instance in which a resident or traveller in the old Ohio Valley was harmed by any wild animal, unprovoked, he will confer a favor on the present writer by communicating the facts to him. Wild dogs can hardly come under this title; dogs that wandered away or were lost or abandoned became savage animals in a very short time. On the other hand, they became tamed again with equal rapidity, and in a wild condition would never make an attacked unprovoked.

Of the forests of the Ohio a German surgeon, Johann D. Shopf, left the following description dated the year after the Revolutionary War, in which he saw service in the ranks of the German mercenaries :

On various journeys beyond the Allegheny we had the opportunity to observe the excellence and the abundant productiveness of the soil in its original undisturbed state. The native plants had a luxuriant, rich look, and grew much stronger and larger than is their habit elsewhere. In a newly planted and unfertilized garden there stood stalks of common sunflowers which measured not less than twenty feet in height and six inches in diameter and were almost like wood. In the forests were beeches, chestnuts, sassafras, tulip trees, wild cherry trees, red maples, sugar maples, black walnuts, several species of hickory, different kinds of oak, sweet gum, and other trees known on the coast, but which were bigger and finer here. The forests are mostly quite free from underbrush, which is good for the hunter and traveller alike. We were shown, as a quite unknown sort, several trees which exactly resembled the *Gleditsia triacanthos*, but had no thorns. Among the rarer trees are the papaws, which flourish only in damp, rich, black soil, often named for them papaw soil. They are slender trees with smooth white bark and handsome foliage. Their smooth egg-shaped fruit is not unpleasant when it is over-ripe, though not to every one's taste. They have a rind and leaf somewhat like a pineapple, but a disagreeable, repulsive odor.



An Early Resident of Pittsburg.  
From a statue by T. A. Mills in the Carnegie Museum.

*[Faint handwritten signature]*

The sugar maple is constantly used by the inhabitants of this region, because the freight makes ordinary sugar too dear for them. The tree occurs more frequently in the mountains than on the coast, and here and there in the forest are to be seen spouts and troughs in which the sap is collected. As is well known, the Indians also use it and boil it down on the spot. Others make it for sale, at one-and-a-half to two Pennsylvania shillings a pound. It is usually brown, rather dirty and sticky, but by frequent refining is made to look more appetizing.<sup>1</sup> A native tea is prepared from the leaves of the red-root (*Ceanothus americana*) which really is not bad, and may even be compared with the minor varieties of the bohea tea. Jonathan Plummer, of Washington county on the Monongahela, prepared alone during the war more than 1,000 pounds of this tea and sold it for from seven-and-a-half to ten Pennsylvania shillings a pound. His manner of preparing it he kept secret; probably he dried the leaves in the sun or in iron vessels over a slow fire. With more careful, neater and better preparation, it would perhaps be even more palatable than it is. At the beginning of the war, on account of general prohibition and enthusiastic patriotism, the importation of Chinese teas was rendered difficult for some time, and everywhere they tried to discover substitutes from domestic growths. This shrub was found the most serviceable and its use still continues in remote regions. Along the coast however, this patriotic tea was less used, and in the mountains the now cheaper foreign tea will soon drive it out of many houses. The use of tea is on the whole quite common.

Besides the common and well-known varieties of the wild American grape, there is on the high and sandy banks of the Ohio a particular species with a low and bushy stock, bearing a small, round, black, sweet grape, which I have seen nowhere else. Ginseng and both varieties of snakeroot are common and are carefully gathered. The other medicinal plants are the *Collinsonia*, *Veronica*, *Virginica*, *Lobelia syphilitica*, *Aralia racemosa*, *Asclepias tuberosa*, *Aristolochia frutescens*, etc.,

<sup>1</sup> More detailed information concerning it is to be found in the description of how sugar is made from various trees in America, by P. Kalm, *Swedish Academy Transactions*, v., 13.

and numberless others which I have mentioned elsewhere in a description of North American medicines. Because of our short stay and the lateness of the season, we saw so few other plants that it is not worth while enumerating them. We found only a few familiar autumn plants in bloom; spring and summer would certainly yield in the mountains and swamps of this western region a rich harvest, not only of rare but of yet unknown plants. Among others these forests would yield many new examples of the fungus family, many unusually large specimens of which are found here and there. I saw a white *Lycoperdon* that weighed two-and-a-quarter pounds and was a foot and eight inches in diameter. Varieties of *Bolotis parasitica*, etc., as unusual and almost as large also occur.

Fruit is still a rarity, here as well as everywhere in the mountains. Near the fort [Pitt] was an orchard, planted by the English garrison, but since neglected, and this is the only one for perhaps a hundred miles around. Here were several varieties of the most delicious pears and apples. The common reproach that America cannot produce such good fruit as Europe can certainly not be applied to this region. In the forest are many wild bees, and on warm still evenings one may plainly perceive the pleasant odor of honey, which hunters are in the habit of gathering. The farm products are Indian corn, wheat, spelt, oats, buckwheat and beets. Because of the small number of the inhabitants, the value of the products is not large and the return from the land not considerable. Mr. Ormsby, our host, owns a piece of land, many miles long, on the Monongahela, which is occupied only by eighteen idle families who should pay a third of the harvest as rent. They do not trouble themselves about producing more than they need themselves, and are quite indifferent whether the owner bids them go or stay, and as at present they have no competitors to fear, their returns are very meagre.

The surrounding wooded hills are inhabited by bears, wolves, lynxes, wildcats, sometimes a puma (*Felis concolor* L.), raccoons, opossums and deer. Elk are not so plentiful as formerly; and buffalo are also being driven away and in any case prefer the lower country. Deer are already diminishing in the

neighborhood; but it is not yet uncommon for a man to see ten or twelve in a day. Since there are no restrictions on hunting, their number will soon be still more decreased. The number of gray and black squirrels to be seen was almost incredible. They were migrating and moved in troops from this region to the coast. Scarcity of nuts and acorns was said to be the cause of this migration, which proved a fatal one to many thousands of these animals, for everywhere they were shot in great numbers. In Wheeling alone two young fellows are said to have killed 219 of the little creatures within three days. At our inn we had at every meal squirrels, roasted, stewed and in pies. Men prophesied from their migration a hard winter, which really followed. Beaver are met here and there, also otter, mink and ground-hogs; I could not decide whether by this last-named animal is meant here in the mountains what elsewhere in America is called the ground-hog (*Arctomys monax* Schreb.), or more probably a badger-like animal. I mention this that others on future occasions may correct the common confusion of names in America, for the *Arctomys monax* itself is sometimes called the ground-hog in America, sometimes woodchuck, and again the name ground-hog, according to Kalm, is given to a badger-like animal.<sup>1</sup> No one has taken an interest either in catching or in finding out about the smaller animals of the mouse family, several of which are said to be in the woods.

<sup>1</sup> Kalm's *Reisen*, ii., p. 332.

## Chapter V

### The " Monongahela Country " and its Metropolis

THE first Europeans who looked with eager eyes upon the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers were impressed instantly with the beauty of the scene and the commanding nature of "the Point" between the rivers. Céloron, in 1749, affirmed that this was the fairest spot along La Belle Rivière, and in 1753 Washington, as we have seen, noted the strategic nature of the future site of Fort Duquesne and Pittsburg.

What these two early representatives of two civilizations thought of this spot, such it has ever been, beautiful and strategic. Even under its everlasting pall of smoke "the Point" of Pittsburg presents often an inspiring picture from the surrounding heights. At night, when the winds are driving the smoke away, the great city lies in the moonlight like a mighty battleship at anchor; two tides rush silently together at the tip of the dark, sharp prow; high up on lofty buildings twinkle the lights on "the bridge," and far up in the blue dome on the summit of the hill glimmer the lights at the head of the mast; over it all, now and again, the fire-flames from Braddock and Homestead flash out as though the fire boxes under

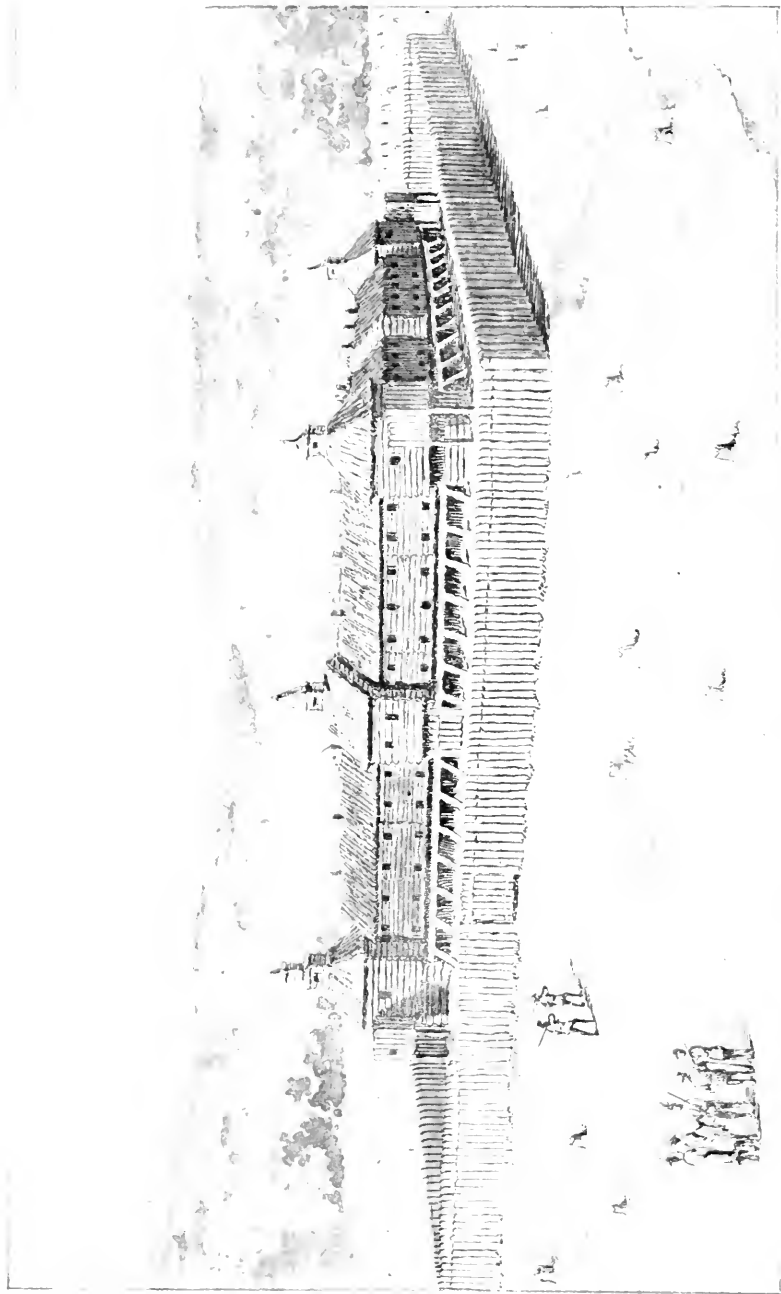


a thousand boilers had been swiftly opened or a hundred broadsides had been suddenly unmasked.

Nowhere are the sights and sounds of the olden days more obscured by the whirl of modern life than here at the technical and legal head of the Ohio River; the roar of the great wheels of business would drown the past—the curling smoke of a thousand furnaces would blind every eye. And yet here at the great centre of what in the old day was known throughout the nation as the “Monongahela country” there are monuments which neither time nor change can efface; and the most wonderful of these is this proud city itself; what it is and what it is to be are suggestive of all that has been done here. It is a great and growing business centre; it has always been that, though with the changing years there have been interesting changes in the forms of business transacted here. As both Washington and General Grant said, it is a strategic military centre, and it is a strategic commercial centre; it has been these for a century and a half for reasons that are as unchanging as the hills. Few cities have retained the same relative importance to the country of which they are the metropolis through six generations as has Pittsburg since its earliest conception one hundred and fifty years ago. In all the panoramic, shifting scenes of the great drama that has been playing in the Monongahela country, the capital city has more than held its own; turn the pages of its unique history as rapidly as you please and you cannot fail to receive two distinct impressions: the growth of Pittsburg has been a healthy, natural growth—the secret of its success lies in its strategic position and the nature of the “Monongahela country” about it; and, secondly,

Pittsburg is pre-eminently a typical American city. The mountains and rivers made "the Point" the site for a great city; socially and politically Pittsburg's equal inheritance from Pennsylvania and New York on the north, and Virginia and Maryland on the south, her close commercial connection with New York and Philadelphia on the east and Kentucky on the west, her close connection by the Ohio River with the South and its markets and all the commercial impetus that this once implied, her inheritance of strong religious principle through the Scotch-Irish who so largely peopled the Monongahela country, and her equal strain of German blood from the Pennsylvania Dutch frontier, and Yankee blood flowing through her to the Connecticut, New Jersey, and Massachusetts colonies in Ohio, have tended to make Pittsburg a cosmopolitan American city par excellence.

The first business conducted here at the head of the Ohio was the international land-jobbing office where France, angry dog-in-the-manger, sat down and thumbed her nose at the English across the mountains. One may well wonder if, after all, the French did not bluster a little here on the Ohio in order to turn the English from the more strategic points, Niagara and Frontenac. The snake-like, curling line of French forts stretched from Quebec to Fort Duquesne; here was the rattle at the end of the tail, and it sounded with sufficient menace to draw three expeditions from the seaboard across the mountains; the rattle lured the English to the Ohio to kill Frenchmen when they should have gone northward to stop the source of supply and communication. The task was not completed until the daring Wolfe scaled the heights of



Type of Blockhouse and Stockade.  
Redrawn from "The Red Men of the Ohio Valley."



Quebec and cut off the serpent's head—leaving the body and tail to squirm.

When at last New France was only a memory in the West, land-jobbers from Pennsylvania and Virginia set up headquarters in Pittsburg (or Fort Pitt as Colonel Bouquet's new fortress near the site of the demolished Fort Duquesne was well named) and the old game on a smaller scale was again being played at the old stand. And there was much to be done—much land to sell and many to buy. We have spoken of the thin line of pioneers which had advanced to the mountainous nest-head of rivers in the Alleghenies; Draper's Meadows was not by any means the only cleared spot beyond that mountainous castle wall at the time of Braddock's defeat. All along the mountain line, at every gap where the buffalo or deer or Indian had found an opening, the vanguard of the pioneers was slowly advancing, with incredible suffering, to the head-waters of the Ohio. The three most notable entrance points were the two already mentioned, the New River route which the Drapers and Ingles knew so well, the Monongahela route followed by Washington's and Braddock's armies, and finally the route far to the south through Cumberland Gap.

Of all these, that which led from the Susquehanna and Potomac to Pittsburg and the "Monongahela country" was the most important; the largest early population in the Ohio Basin was on the Monongahela River and its tributaries, the Great and Little Youghiogheny, the Cheat River and Tygart's Valley Creek, and extending down the Virginia side of the Ohio from Pittsburg to Wheeling Creek. The bold Christopher Gist made the first genuine settlement hereabouts, on

what is now Mount Braddock, and soon all about his clearing bright axes were ringing a truer tune than ever the muzzle of muskets could sing—the song of home-builders in an old, new land sung by a home-loving people. Yet the aftermath of the French War—Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763—proved terribly fatal to these fast appearing clearings in the glades and forests. The Delawares and Shawanese, strongly allied to the French, took Pontiac's bloody belt with wild delight and sought with utmost relish to carry out their *coup* of the great Indian's campaign, the capture of Fort Pitt. Besieging the little fortress they spread destruction far and wide in the Monongahela country; every new clearing enraged them, and where they could not secure the white trespassers on the Indian land themselves they applied the torch to cabins which had cost many days' hard labor and to crops planted and cultivated in the weakening sweat of fear.

The small population of Pittsburg, which, in 1763, perhaps numbered three hundred souls, flocked to little Fort Pitt about which the village was planted; as many more from the country hastened thither; the remaining population in the countryside "forted" in the blockhouses which, like the Jewish Cities of Refuge, they built at convenient points. But Fort Pitt, like Fort Detroit, held fast, and Pontiac's hope faded and his warriors fell back to their towns on the Muskingum; thither Colonel Bouquet marched in 1764, and extorted a humiliating treaty.

Now, in the twinkling of an eye, the clearings in the Monongahela country were quickly reoccupied; the main settlements were at "Redstone Old Fort" (Brownsville), and Turkeyfoot (Confluence), Penn-

sylvania; houses had been raised at Somerset; Alexander McKee made an improvement at the mouth of Chartier's Creek, opposite Logstown; other families had settled on the Ohio above Two-Mile Creek; the Ormsbys and Thompsons had joined Frazier at the mouth of Turtle Creek on the Monongahela and Braddock's Field, and William Christy had made an improvement on fatal Grant's Hill "within two miles of Fort Pitt east" for the "benefit of travellers." In 1765 the town of Pittsburg was laid out. By this time all the land on both sides of Braddock's Road for some distance back had been taken up; Maryland pioneers soon settled on the Youghiogheny and Monongahela rivers, and many Scotch-Irish from Bedford and York counties settled between the Monongahela and Ohio rivers, in what is now Washington County, Pennsylvania.

The rapidity of the movement of population and the proportions it assumed amazed those in control. Though the land had been conquered from the French, yet the Indians had given the English no rights to lands beyond the mountains; thus, at least, the Indians interpreted the treaty of Lancaster. In accordance with this claim the King of England issued a proclamation October 7, 1763, prohibiting the colonists from settling beyond the head-waters of the Atlantic Ocean streams. The proclamation is not more remarkable for its selfishness than for its stupidity; as well might the King of England have issued a mandate ordering the laurel buds not to burst in the Alleghenies in the spring of 1764 as to so misjudge the genius of the American people as to attempt to prohibit their expansion simply to secure the good-will of the Indians

and their heavy rolls of peltry. It is interesting to note the opinion of such a thoughtful and knowing man as Washington, who wrote William Crawford:

I can never look upon that proclamation in any other light (but I say this between ourselves) than as a temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians. It must fall, of course, in a few years, especially when those Indians consent to our occupying the lands.

And Crawford proceeded now (in 1767) to survey some of the best lands in the Monongahela country<sup>1</sup> for Washington in direct defiance of the proclamation!

Yet the proclamation played its part in disturbing the minds of the swarming pioneers; coming thither with a small pittance of money, they feared to buy lest the Crown should carry out its implied threat and dispossess them. Another cause of unrest was the fact that the line between Virginia and Pennsylvania (Mason and Dixon's Line) had not been completed through the Monongahela country, and both States claimed even the site of Pittsburg. The Virginia pioneers feared to pay Pennsylvania officials for land lest it be found to lie in Virginia, and vice versa. Another cause of disquiet was the numerous grants made or claimed to have been made by the English Crown or its legal representatives (the commander of Fort Pitt, for instance) in this region, all of which were more or less at variance with the spirit of the proclamation of 1763; the soldiers and officers of the French War campaigns had their claims; the heirs, assigns, or members of the Ohio Company had their

<sup>1</sup> At Great Meadows, and on Washington's Run and Chartier's Creek. See A. B. Hulbert, *Washington and the West*, 10, 28-9, 52-3 seq.





Remains of Old Milk-House on Washington's Plantation on the  
Youghiogheny River.



claims; there were also the Neale and Company's grant, the Walpole Grant, and private grants (real or promised) that had been made to prime favorites like Colonel George Croghan, who lived at his country-seat four miles up the Allegheny River from Pittsburg. And, contrary to what may be naturally supposed, the Indian raids into the Monongahela country, which wrought such desolation, did not cease simply because the country was becoming well settled. It can almost be said that they increased; the Indians had now learned the use of many of the white men's implements, and it was from the populated districts that the horses, for instance, were to be obtained, as well as much else that the savage had learned to like; here, too, the crops were most luxuriant. Thus it was that on the Monongahela country the fury of scores of murderous raids was spent, and when at last they ceased there they were directed to the Ohio River to intercept the products of the Monongahela country en route to the 'stations' and settlements of Kentucky and Ohio.

This unstable and restless condition of society had its effect on the minds and hearts of men; after a few false titles to property had been bought, bringing the purchaser, eventually, ruin and disgrace, men began to be very wary of the host of land-jobbers which besieged most pioneers. The result was that many who had settled in this region became disgusted with the horde of land sharpers which infested such points as Brownsville (Redstone Old Fort) and Pittsburg, and resolved to go farther west to newer lands down the Ohio. This, and other causes, resulted in one of the curious phases of American frontier life—the constant removal of pioneer families from place to

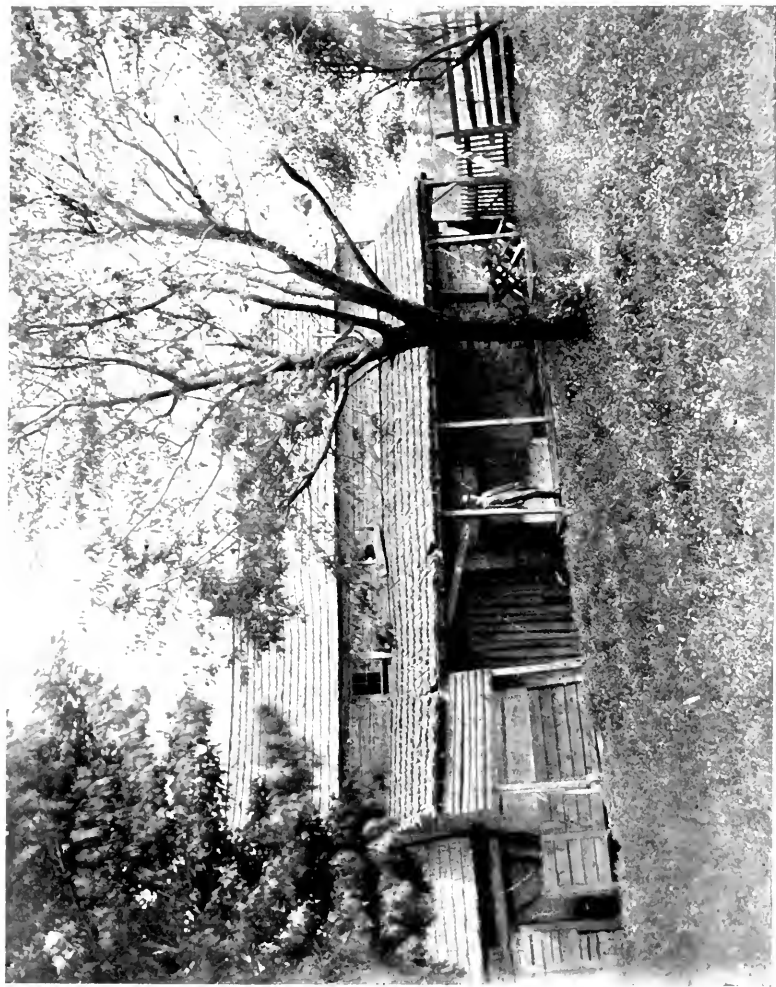
place. It was not, as has been affirmed on thousands of pages, altogether a love of the wilderness and its solitude that drove these men from place to place, but rather a desire to escape the early social conditions which existed in the earlier frontier communities, filled with criminals and outlaws from the older settlements east of the mountains. To tell the truth, there is no describing the actual conditions that existed, for instance, at the infant settlement of Pittsburg in these rough years when the upper waters of the Ohio were receiving their first population. There was little law and less order; and a quiet German pioneer with a family, for instance, would have gotten clear of such a place, and its surroundings of drunkenness and revelling, with all the despatch in his power.

Pilgrim is not by any means too saintly a word to be applied to the genuine pioneer; he might be uncouth in dress and manners, untidy in the extreme as to appearance, ignorant of letters and innocent of all that is represented by our word culture; yet at his average he was a brave and a generous man who labored for and loved his hearthstone and fought with fury for the wife and children who gathered at nightfall around its ruddy light. But the very blessings such men brought into the wilderness of the upper Ohio in the last three decades of the eighteenth century were enjoyed by thousands of adventurers of every grade from the cutthroat knave to the polished land-shark; these made many of the pioneer settlements veritable hells, threatening the reputation and happiness of all who came within their reach. It is in point to recall that Mary Harris, the white woman captive among the Delawares (from whom White Woman's River in

eastern Ohio is named), preferred the wigwam to the frontier cabin since she "did not see how white men could be so wicked as some were on the frontier"; and also to remember that an ex-commander at Fort Pitt wrote to his successor congratulating him on "being able to control the beasts of the garrison and the devils of the town." And so, while describing the making of the important settlement at the head of the Ohio, it is proper to hint at the conditions which really existed and which tended to hasten the flow of pioneers onward toward the Black Forest through which the Ohio River flowed.

The Ohio River, it is to be observed, runs almost straight north from Pittsburg for some twenty-five miles, turning into its general southwesterly direction near the mouth of Beaver River; this fact explains the early importance of what we call the Panhandle of West Virginia, as well as the early rise and importance of Wheeling and Grave Creek. Washington and Beaver counties, Pennsylvania, and what is now Ohio County, West Virginia, composed the frontier of the Monongahela country. As the savages came rushing from the Muskingum and Scioto upon Pittsburg, they would cross the Ohio near Wheeling and take the short cut through Washington County to the Ohio at Pittsburg. Again, the pioneers reaching Brownsville on the Monongahela found that by a short and easy land march of less than fifty miles, across this frontier, Wheeling could be reached, and a long, dangerous river journey of three or four times that distance could be saved; and the Ohio was always navigable below Wheeling whether it was above that point or not.

Thus pioneers swarming across the Alleghenies on Braddock's Road to the Ohio naturally chose the short cut and reached the Ohio below Pittsburg. There was little or no reason for their going to that town, until late in the century; in 1770, Washington, who was in the West to visit his lands, affirms that the number of houses at Pittsburg was twenty, making a population of perhaps one hundred persons. Two years before this, 1768, when an effort was being made to pacify the Indians by summoning the inhabitants of the region to withdraw it is recorded that there were "eight or ten families" at Turkey Foot (Confluence), and a "few families" at Little Crossings; the messengers bearing the summons were confronted at Gist's plantation on Mount Braddock by "about thirty or forty men" from Cheat River and Stewart's Crossing (New Haven, Pa., opposite Connellsville), and thirty-two men collected to hear the summons at "Red Stone" (Brownsville). From this meagre data it is possible to estimate the population of the Monongahela country in 1770 (allowing for accessions and including Pittsburg) at fifteen hundred souls; this is probably quite liberal. When Dunmore's War broke out in 1774 "more than one thousand people" crossed the Monongahela River at Brownsville in one day hurrying eastward; but the country had filled fast between 1770 and 1774. The aforesaid summons was made in accordance with an "Act to remove the persons now settled, and to prevent others from settling on any lands in this province not purchased of the Indians" which was passed by the Pennsylvania Assembly February 3, 1768. It was sent in the hands of the hero-preacher



A Pioneer Blockhouse in the "Monongahela Country." The loop-holes may be seen under the eaves





Reverend John Steele of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Certain Indians of the Six Nations from Mingo Bottoms, by name Captain Haven, Captain Hornet, Captain Mygog-Wigo, Captain Strike-belt, Captain Pouch, Captain Gilly, and Captain Slewballs, came to meet Steele; they said, referring to a coming treaty: " . . . When George Croghan and our great men will talk together, we will tell what to do." Yet the Indians also expressed regret that the whites were to be forcibly driven away and thus hurt Mr. Steele's influence.

But this question of Indian ownership was soon put to an end, as far as the Monongahela country was concerned, by the treaty of Fort Stanwix (Rome, New York), where the Virginians, under Thomas Walker, "purchased" from the Six Nations all the land lying southwest of the Ohio River as far down as the mouth of the Tennessee River. The Delawares and Shawanese on the Scioto and Muskingum and who hunted continually on the south side of the Ohio had no word in this transaction, though they used bitter words and threats when they heard of it; and bitter deeds followed hard on bitter words. The Indians northwest of the Ohio disliked the Virginians who had bought this region more than the Pennsylvanians; as a rule they liked the traders from the latter province and disliked the settlers who came mostly from Virginia or farther south. With the signing of the treaty of Fort Stanwix the Virginians came rapidly to the Ohio and descended it "in shoals," as one pioneer affirmed; in a moment, as it were, a thousand clearings in the Black Forest appeared on the southern shore of the Ohio between Pittsburg and "the Falls"

at Louisville. The years 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, and 1774 were wonderful years in the history of this Black Forest to which the Ohio River led.

A number of explorers had gone down the valley where Mary Ingles lived in this decade and a half since Braddock's defeat from both the Draper and Greenbrier settlements on the New River and the Monongahela country. The most important of these were George Croghan, who lived on the Allegheny, Captain Gordon, and George Washington. From the records of these men we glean much the same sombre picture that Mary Ingles saw—the dark, wet forests on either hand, the great piles of driftwood, the heavy timbered hill-tops in the distance. Below Pittsburg there were no clearings, though it was only a moment now before a vast tide of emigrants left the Monongahela country for the “lower country.”

Washington has left the clearest picture of the Ohio of pre-Revolutionary days, as the result of his trip down the river in 1770. Even before the treaty of Fort Stanwix was made this farsighted man saw that the Ohio Valley was to become the home of a great, free people. He was as practical as he was farsighted and began then, as we have noted, to invest in western lands. It was to see the country and to mark the boundaries of the Virginia regiment's bounty lands that Washington made the journey. The river trip began at Pittsburg, October 17, 1770; the party consisted of nine, including Washington and his physician, Dr. James Craik. One “large canoe,” as Washington termed it, held the entire party and their “store of provisions and necessaries.” After a couple of days a “barrel of biscuit” was buried on an island to lighten

the canoe. The entries in Washington's *Diary* relate mostly to the nature of the land on both sides of the river. Colonel Croghan accompanied the party to Logstown. From Pittsburg to Logstown the river was full of "ugly rifts and shoals, which we found difficult to pass." The first night was spent four miles above Logstown; the second, eight miles above the mouth of Yellow Creek. On the third evening the Iroquois "Mingo Town" was reached, "a little above Cross Creeks." The town contained twenty cabins and some seventy inhabitants.

Here a report reached the travellers that two traders had been murdered at Grape Vine Town, thirty-eight miles below; but after a council of war it was decided to proceed on the morrow. Passing "the Cross Creeks" the mouth of Fishing Creek was reached on the night of the 23d.

On the 24th "Split-Island creek" was passed, the name originating among the Indians because an island lay in the Ohio opposite its mouth. "Six miles below this again," writes Washington, "we came to another creek on the west side called . . . Wheeling; and about a mile lower down appears to be another small water [stream] coming in on the east side, which I remark, because of the scarcity of them, and to show how badly furnished this country is with mill-seats." About two miles below this Pipe Creek was passed, "so called by the Indians from a stone which is found here, out of which they make pipes." Three miles onward "Fox-Grape-Vine" or Captina Creek was reached, on which, eight miles from its mouth, was "Grape-Vine Town." Messengers were sent up to the town, which they found occupied by two lone

squaws, the other inhabitants being away on a hunting expedition. From them it was learned that the foundation for the rumor of murder consisted in the accidental drowning of a trader, which shows how false reports could circulate and become magnified in a wilderness entirely innocent of the telegraph and newspaper. The name of the Indian village suggests the vine-clad nature of the olden forest previously mentioned. "About five miles from the Vine creek," writes Washington, "comes in a very large creek to the eastward, called by the Indians Cut creek, from a town or tribe of Indians, which they say was cut off entirely in a very bloody battle between them and the Six Nations. This creek empties just at the lower end of an island, and is seventy or eighty yards wide; I fancy it is the creek commonly called Wheeling, by the people of Redstone." Such is the slight reference to what was to become a most historic point on the upper Ohio. Encamping on the night of the 25th in the middle of the Long Reach, the party "threw out some lines, and found a catfish of the size of our largest river catfish, hooked to one of them in the morning, though it was of the smallest kind here." Camp was pitched next night about four miles above the mouth of the Muskingum. In passing the latter river next day Washington estimates the distance to the mouth of the Little Kanawha at "about thirteen miles"; as the actual distance by survey is twelve and one half miles it seems that Washington's estimate was a very clever one. Concerning all these branches of the Ohio Washington made particular inquiry from the Indians who accompanied him in a separate canoe; their length and the

fertility of their shores were the points upon which information was desired.

The prospector was particularly pleased with the appearance of the land lying on the Virginia side of the Ohio between Long Reach and the mouth of the Little Kanawha. Here he made a survey. Below the Little Kanawha little of note occurs. The navigation of the river is only slightly referred to during the entire passage; above the mouth of the Muskingum there was some "pretty strong water" but not "strong" enough to be termed "rifts"; here "the sides of the river," Washington writes, "were a good deal incommoded with old trees, which impeded our passage a little." At Great Bend Washington found a rapid, but below that "the water . . . was quite dead, and as easily passed one way as the other." On the 27th camp was made opposite the mouth of the Hockhocking; and the next at the mouth of an unknown creek six miles below where the Iroquois chieftain Kiyashuta was encamped with his hunting party. On the evening of the 30th the exploring party camped five miles above the mouth of the Great Kanawha.

On the 31st the canoe was sent down-stream to the Great Kanawha while Washington and party made the journey by land, taking in a wide sweep of country. Five days were spent in this region exploring and hunting. On November 3d, "at the beginning of the bottom, above the junction of the rivers," Washington "marked two maples, an elm and a hoop-wood tree, as a corner of the [Virginia] soldiers' [bounty] lands, if we can get it, intending to take all the bottom from hence to the rapids in the Great

Bend, in one survey." Early prospectors judged land largely by the size and nature of the timber growing thereon; on the Kanawha Washington described a giant sycamore which, being measured three feet from the ground, was found to have a circumference of forty-four feet and ten inches. In summing up his trip Washington probably gives the clearest general description of the Ohio of early times that we have. He says:

There is very little difference in the general width of the river from Fort Pitt to the Kenhawa; but in the depth I believe the odds are considerably in favor of the lower parts, as we found no shallows below the Mingo Town, except in one or two places where the river was broad, and there, I do not know but there might have been a deep channel in some parts of it. Every here and there are islands, some larger and some smaller, which, operating in the nature of locks, or steps, occasion pretty still water above, but for the most part strong and rapid water alongside of them. However none of these is so swift but that a vessel may be rowed or set up with poles. When the river is in its natural state, large canoes, that will carry five or six thousand weight or more, may be worked against the stream by four hands, twenty or twenty-five miles a day; and down a good deal more. The Indians, who are very dexterous (even their women) in the management of canoes, have their hunting-camps and cabins all along the river, for the convenience of transporting their skins by water to market. In the fall, so soon as the hunting-season comes on, they set out with their families for this purpose; and in hunting will move their camps from place to place, till by the spring they get two or three hundred or more miles from their towns; then catch beaver in their way up, which frequently brings them into the month of May, when the women are employed in planting. The men are at market, and in idleness, till the autumn again, when they pursue the same course. During the summer months they live a poor and perishing life.



The Mound at Moundsville, West Virginia.



An Old Ford on the Upper Youghiogheny.





The Indians who reside upon the Ohio, the upper parts of it at least, are composed of Shawanees, Delawares, and some of the Mingoes, who, getting but little part of the consideration that was given for the lands eastward of the Ohio, view the settlements of the people upon this river with an uneasy and jealous eye, and do not scruple to say that they must be compensated for their right if the people settle thereon, notwithstanding the cession of the Six Nations. On the other hand, the people of Virginia and elsewhere are exploring and marking all the lands that are valuable, not only on the Redstone and other waters of the Monongahela, but along the Ohio as low as the Little Kanawha; and by next summer I suppose they will get to the Great Kanawha at least. How difficult it may be to contend with these people afterwards it is easy to be judged, from every day's experience of lands actually settled, supposing these settlements to be made; than which nothing is more probable, if the Indians permit them, from the disposition of the people at present. A few settlements in the midst of some of the large bottoms would render it impracticable to get any large quantity of land together; as the hills all the way down the river, as low as I went, come pretty close, are steep and broken, and incapable of settlements (though some of them are rich), and only fit to support the bottoms with timber and wood. The land back of the bottoms, as far as I have been able to judge, either from my own observations or from my own information, is nearly the same, that is, exceedingly uneven and hilly; and I presume there are no bodies of flat, rich land to be found, till one gets far enough from the river to head the little runs and drains, that come through the hills, and to the sources of the creeks and their branches. This, it seems, is the case with the lands upon the Monongahela and Youghioghaney, and I fancy holds good upon this river, till you get into the flat lands below the falls. The bottom land differs a good deal in quality. That highest up the river in general is richest; though the bottoms are neither so wide nor so long, as those below. Walnut, cherry, and some other kinds of wood neither tall nor large, but covered with grape vines, with the fruit of which this country at this instant abounds, are the growth of the richest bottoms; but on the other hand, these bottoms appear to me to be the

lowest and most subject to floods. The sugar-tree and ash mixed with walnut, compose the growth of the next richest low grounds; beech, poplar, and oaks the last. The soil of this is also good, but inferior to either of the other kinds; and beech bottoms are objectionable on account of the difficulty of clearing them, as their roots spread over a large surface of ground and are hard to kill.<sup>1</sup>

As Washington forecast, the Ohio Valley soon saw the pioneers in almost every vale; the years 1771-1774 witnessed a great change and on all the Allegheny trails were parties hurrying westward to "stake" a claim, purposing to go back and bring their families later. The bold frontiersman Ebenezer Zane with his brothers Jonathan and Silas—"typical, old-fashioned names these," writes Dr. Thwaites, "bespeaking the God-fearing, Bible-loving, Scotch Presbyterian stock from which sprang so large a proportion of trans-Allegheny pioneers"—made the first clearing at the mouth of Wheeling Creek and laid the beginnings of the important city of Wheeling in 1769, though Washington does not mention it; here in a few years Fort Fincastle was erected for the protection of the frontier of the Monongahela country. An important settlement was also made at the mouth of Grave Creek on the present site of Moundsville, West Virginia. Here the youthful George Rogers Clark, who, as we shall see, was to be the conqueror of Illinois, made himself a tomahawk claim and spent the winter of 1773.

From this point downward there were no settlements of importance until the Ohio emerged from the Black Forest; here to the southward lay the beautiful Blue

<sup>1</sup> Sparks, *Writings of Washington*, ii., 530, 531

Grass country of *Ken-ta-kee*—the “meadow land.” Virginians were acquainted with the blue grass at home and knew that it meant the finest pasturage and rich soil. To this splendid country there were two doors; the Ohio River was the front door and Cumberland Gap in the Cumberland Mountain range was the back door. The first comers to build a cabin in this land of milk and honey came in at the front door—the Ohio River—in the spring of 1774; James Harrod and forty companions descended the Ohio and, landing near “the Falls” (Louisville), passed inland to Mercer County and laid the beginnings of what was afterward Harrodsburg. Attempts had been made to secure a foothold at “the Falls,” but the danger from the Indians across the river was too great and the interior settlements and clearings increased in number far more rapidly than any along the river. The bold Daniel Boone opened the back door to Kentucky in 1775, reaching the site of his fort, Boonesboro, on the Kentucky River, the day after the Revolutionary War had been precipitated at Lexington and Concord.

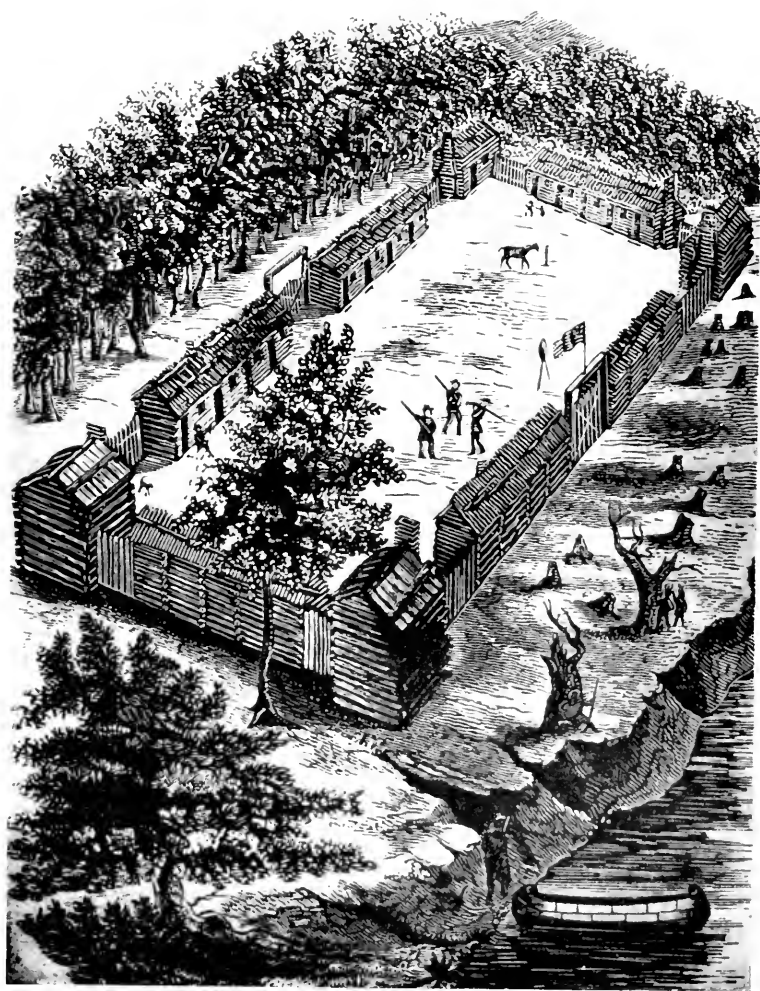
Pittsburg was at the threshold of this “front door” to the Ohio Valley, though this was true more in a military sense than a civil one; Fort Duquesne and then Fort Pitt were the most important western military posts in the West throughout the Old French and Revolutionary wars; so far as the emigration was concerned, however, it was some years before Pittsburg became the leading port of embarkation.

As we shall see, this post at the head of the Ohio was the starting point and base of supplies for many campaigns and expeditions, but for many years after the

town was laid out in 1765 it was only a collection of huts about a fort. The nature of the place may, therefore, be readily imagined, especially from the fact that most commanders who were attempting to make soldiers out of their men desired to have them at a distance from it. It was a trader's and sutler's camp. At the close of the Revolution the agent of the Penns, Mr. Tench Francis, arranged to lay out the Manor of Pittsburg, under the direction of George Woods, who employed Thomas Vickroy in the work. Arthur Lee wrote as follows of the little settlement:

Pittsburg is inhabited almost entirely by Scots and Irish, who live in paltry log houses, and are as dirty as in the north of Ireland, or even Scotland. There is a great deal of small trade carried on; the goods being brought at the vast expense of forty-five shillings per cwt. from Philadelphia and Baltimore. They take, in the shops, money, wheat, flour and skins. There are in the town four attornies, two doctors, and not a priest of any persuasion, nor church, nor chapel. The rivers encroach fast on the town; and to such a degree, that, as a gentleman told me, the Allegheny had within thirty years of his memory, carried away one hundred yards. The place, I believe, will never be very considerable.

A far more interesting picture of early Pittsburg and its environs of this time was written by Johann D. Schöpf, who came to America as surgeon of the Anspach-Bayreuth mercenaries and fought on the English side in the Revolution. He remained in the service till the end of the war in 1783, when he undertook a journey to learn more of the condition and natural features of the country and also to add to his collections of plants and animals. This journey is described in his book, *Reise durch einige der Vereinigten*



Fort Boonesborough, Kentucky.



*Staaten*.<sup>1</sup> The parts describing his visits to Pittsburg and vicinity are presented herewith, the original spelling of place-names being retained:

In Pittsburg we were directed to the best inn, a rickety little wooden cabin on the Monongahela, whose exterior was unpromising, but we were encouraged by the sight of several well-dressed men and fine-appearing women. They were not, however, as much interested in us as in our conveyance, for we had made the whole journey in a chaise, which till now had been considered quite impossible. We had, therefore, not been at all surprised when, as we passed a house in the mountains, the mother with shrill cries called her children together to show them what they had never before seen, a chaise. . . .

Two years after Pontiac's Rebellion Pittsburg was again laid out more carefully than before on the east bank of the Monongahela, some 300 yards from the fort. It now contains about sixty wooden houses and cabins, in which live only a little more than 100 families, for the growth of the place, which had been rapid at first, was checked by the outbreak of the last war. The first stone house was built this summer and you will soon see several substantial buildings, as this place has strong hopes of becoming in course of time a large and important city. There are still no houses of public worship or judicial buildings. There is, however, a German preacher living here who officiates for all creeds, and the State of Pennsylvania, according to the constitution, sends hither once or twice a year a judge to administer justice. The inhabitants are still poor, judged by the conditions prevailing elsewhere, and are also extremely idle and lazy, so much so that they hesitate when they are offered money to earn, though they are most avaricious. Every one complains about this, and we also found that every

<sup>1</sup> *Reise durch einige der mittlern und sudlichen Vereinigten Nordamerikanischen Staaten nach Ost-Florida und den Bahama-inseln, unternommen in den jahren 1783 und 1784.* 2 v. Erlangen, 1788. Our extract is from a portion of this work translated for, and published in, a *Bulletin* of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg.

trifling thing made here is considerably dearer even than in Philadelphia; that the people do not want to get rich through industry and moderate prices, but by fleecing the strangers and travellers; and because they hate work, they charge high prices when one disturbs their comfortable inactivity.

Their means of livelihood have hitherto been limited to farming and trade in skins and furs. Now, however, as very considerable settlements have already been begun farther down the Ohio, which increase constantly and rapidly because of the great number of people who are daily moving in that direction, the inhabitants of Pittsburg derive much profit from trade and the coming and going of travellers. On account of its advantageous situation, Pittsburg, inconsiderable as the town now is, cannot fail to be in the future an important place for inland trade. . . .

This place will not fail to get a portion of the northern fur trade (provided the friendship of the Indians can be assured), though Newyork has great hopes of that trade, and on account of the even more conveniently situated Oneyda, Mohawk and Hudson rivers, must be able to attract the more important portion. It is certainly a long distance from Pittsburg down the Ohio and Mississippi, but they often go from here to New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi in fourteen days.<sup>1</sup> The current of the Ohio is rapid and carries much tonnage in spring and fall; and this will be the most convenient and the only route for the future exportation of the products of this mountain region.

The first French fort, which was really only a stockade and stood just at the point between the two rivers, has long since disappeared. Under English rule a more extensive fortification of five bastions with a moat and stone wall was begun, but it was still unfinished when the last British garrison left it in the year 1774. For a long time before that peace had prevailed with all the Indian nations; and consequently this and other fortified places on the Ohio, Wabash, Illinois and Mississippi were regarded as unnecessary, and the garrisons withdrawn. The Americans, to whom this fort was of much

<sup>1</sup> A most singularly exaggerated statement.



assistance in the last war, have spent nothing more on it, but on account of the Indians have constantly kept a considerable garrison here, which at present is on the point of withdrawing. Because of its position the fort can only be useful against Indians, for it is entirely commanded by various neighboring hills, particularly by a high hill lying directly opposite the fort on the other side of the Monongahela, here only some 1,200 feet wide, and from which it is even maintained that the Indians have shot their arrows into the very middle of the fort.

There was another little fort thirty miles up the river from here at MacIntosh and still another at Wheeling. The garrisons maintained here made some business for the place and also enlivened it, for during the war there were balls, games, concerts and theatricals, all this 400 miles west of the ocean. The departure of so many agreeable men and the cessation of so many pleasures could be regarded only with keen regret by the Pittsburg ladies.

The Allegheny and Monongahela come together almost at a right angle. The point between them is a sand hill deposited by the current, which brings down pulverized gravel and the same red sand that is found in the neighboring mountains. The banks are twenty to thirty feet above the water, but this deep bed is filled spring and fall, and occasionally the river even overflows. Then we are assured that a frigate of twenty guns can pass all obstacles and sail safely down the river, which then has an average depth of twenty-five feet or more; the current is so swift that boats can make upwards of 100 miles a day going down-stream. At first there were only two wells here, thirty-five feet deep and often dry. The bed of both rivers was formerly far higher and on land now dry and cultivated. We noticed two or three hills rising one behind the other, which have exactly the outline and direction of the point now being formed by the rivers. Grantshill is the farthest of these and lies half a mile from the river. From there one can plainly distinguish the successive changes in the river beds. Both rivers are now so shallow in many places that one could ford them.

The low water and the shortness of our stay prevented my seeing anything of the fishes of this region. It is said, and it is

also probable, that the streams rising on the west side of the mountains and flowing into the Gulf of Mexico by way of the Mississippi have only a few sorts of fishes in common with the rivers flowing into the ocean from the east side. There is a species of sturgeon, which is described as differing from the sturgeon of the Hudson and the Delaware. People tell about large trout and pike, which are like those found in other parts of the country. Yellow perch are said to be found there. A sort of catfish, somewhat similar to the catfish so common in the Delaware (*Silurus catus* L.), is found weighing from thirty to fifty pounds and some declare that farther down the stream they have seen specimens of this species weighing from eighty to 100 pounds. The spawning fishes, particularly the shad (*Clupea alosa* L.), which in April and May go far up-stream in nearly all the rivers of the eastern coast, are almost entirely lacking in these western rivers.

A particular kind of turtle, which, however, I could not get a sight of, lives in the Ohio and its branches. Some call it the soft-shelled, and others the green turtle. The upper and middle part of the shell is hard, but the edges are said to be soft and pliable, and the whole shell may be cooked to a jelly. The hind feet are said to be web-footed, as with sea-turtles, the fore feet are provided with toes, and the meat is good to eat. Snapping turtles are also found in the waters of the Ohio. . . .

The entire region about Fort Pitt is hilly, but all the hills are fertile, with good soil, rich pasture-land alternating with well-grown timber. As this is not so generally the case on the east side of the mountains, almost every stranger who comes here finds the western country pleasanter and more desirable. There are already dwellings and farms on the high ridge of the hill which slopes sharply down to the Monongahela directly opposite Pittsburg. At the foot of the hill marble is found, which apparently rests on gneiss-like rock. This marble is bluish, but becomes whiter as one ascends the hill. It is harder, more compact and of finer grain than the common limestone resembling it in color, which is found on the east side of the mountains. Fine, beautiful, liver-colored marble is also sometimes found. It is said that the lime made from it does not absorb moisture as readily and does not slake as quickly in the



View of Pittsburg,  
From General Collot's "Voyage in North America in 1796."



air as other lime; the cause perhaps is that it is not sufficiently burnt, as nothing is yet known in America of proper lime kilns. Above the marble lies coarse slate, which grows finer higher up and passes into a great bed of the finest coal. This coal is covered with a layer of coarse, clayey, soft and bright-colored slate; then follows again a stratum many feet thick of very laminated and micaceous sandstone extending almost to the top of the hill.

In 1786, two enterprising young men, John Scull and Joseph Hall, ventured to invest their money in a newspaper, and on July 29th the first issue of the *Pittsburg Gazette* made its appearance; the circulation was handicapped by the lack of postal facilities, there being no regular mail. In September a post was established to Bedford, Pa., where it was met by post from New York and Virginia. In August, 1789, it appears from the *Gazette* there was then settled in the town "one clergyman of the Calvinistic church, Samuel Barr and one of the German Calvinistic church occasionally preached here." Also that "a church of squared timber and moderate dimensions is on the way to be built." This stood within the ground now covered by the First Presbyterian Church.

Two "medical gentlemen" were then in the town; one was Dr. Bedford; also two lawyers, probably the late Judge Brackenridge and John Woods.

Carriage rate from Philadelphia was then six pence for each pound; a *Gazette* writer makes the following prediction: "However improved the conveyance may be, and by whatever channel, the importation of heavy articles will still be expensive. The manufacturing them, therefore, will become more an object here than elsewhere." In 1786-87, a public school was founded

by the Legislature, and the First Presbyterian Church incorporated.

The borough of Pittsburg was incorporated on April 22, 1794, and the city on March 18, 1816. The borough of Allegheny was incorporated April 14, 1828, and was made a city between 1837 and 1840.

From 1790 to 1800 [writes Sherman Day] the business of Pittsburg and the West was small, but gradually improving; the fur trade of the West was very important and Messrs. Peter Maynard and William Morrison were engaged largely in it, and from 1790 to 1796 received considerable supplies of goods through Mr. Guy Bryan, a wealthy merchant in Philadelphia, and the goods were taken to Kaskaskia in a barge, which annually returned to Pittsburg, laden with bear, buffalo and deer skins, and furs and peltries of all kinds, which were sent to Mr. Bryan, and the barge returned laden with goods. At that period there was no regular drayman in Pittsburg, and the goods were generally hauled from the boats with a three horse wagon,—until (in 1797) a Mr. James Rattle, an Englishman, settled in this city, and was encouraged to take up the business, and drayed and stored goods, until a box of drygoods was stolen from his yard, and shed, (for then we had no warehouse, nor regular commission merchant, in Pittsburg,)—and this broke the poor man up, and he died brokenhearted and unhappy.

Hon. H. M. Brackenridge in his *Recollections* has left us a graphic picture of early Pittsburg: which we give practically in his own words.

Two plains, partly short commons, depastured by the town cows, embraced the foot of Grant's Hill, one extending a short distance up the Monongahela, the other stretching up the Allegheny river, while the town of straggling houses, easily counted, and more of logs than frame, and more of the latter than of brick or stone, lay from the junction of the Monongahela. On the bank of the Allegheny at the distance of a long Sunday afternoon's walk, stood Fort Fayette, surmounted by



Carnegie Institute.





the stripes and stars of the old thirteen : and from this place the King's Orchard, or garden, extending to the ditch of old Fort Pitt, the name by which the little town was known. On the north side of the river just mentioned, the hills rose rude and rough, without the smoke of a single chimney.

The clear and beautiful Allegheny, the loveliest stream that ever glistened to the moon, was still the boundary of civilization; for all beyond it was called the Indian country, and associated in the mind with many a fireside tale of scalping-knife, hair-breadth escapes, and all the horrors of savage warfare. Beyond the Monongahela the hill rose from the water's edge, with some two or three puny houses squeezed in between it and the river. On its summit stood the farmhouse and barn of Major Kirkpatrick; the barn was burnt down by the heroes of the Whiskey Insurrection.

Grant's Hill was a favorite promenade in fine weather, and on Sunday afternoon it was pleasing to see the line of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen and children—nearly the whole population—repairing to this beautiful eminence. It was considered so essential to the comfort and recreation of the inhabitants, that they could scarcely imagine how a town could exist without its Grant's Hill! There was a fine spring half way up, which was supposed to afford better water than that of the pumps, and some persons even thought it was possessed of medical properties—which might be the case, after a pleasant afternoon's walk, and the toil in overcoming the steep ascent.

In 1786 the population of Pittsburg was about 500; in 1796 it was 1395; in 1810, 4768; in 1820, 7248; in 1830, 12,542; in 1840, 21,115. In 1847 the estimated population including the suburbs Allegheny, Manchester, Birmingham, Lawrenceville, and others was 47,000.

To exhibit a steady growth [we read in *Pittsburg and Allegheny in the Centennial Year*] with the population of the South and West, the ratio of four-tenths of one per cent. of

that population is all that would be required to be maintained. In 1810 the population of the city was 4,786, or nine-twentieths of one per cent.; the ratio of four-tenths of one per cent. being only 4,300. In 1820 the population of the city was 7,248, being not quite three-tenths of one per cent.; the ratio of four-tenths requiring 10,164 inhabitants. At this period the business of the city was in a ruined condition in consequence of the reaction in the prices and activities of the war of 1812, under which Pittsburg had been very prosperous. In 1830 the maintaining of the ratio of four-tenths of one per cent. would require that Pittsburg should have 13,324 inhabitants; it had at that date 16,988, or five-tenths of one per cent. In 1840 the ratio of 1800 required a population of 20,692; there was 38,931 or fifteen-twentieths of one per cent. In 1850 the population of Pittsburg was equal to nineteen-twentieths of one per cent. of that of the West and South, or 79,873, while the maintenance of the ratio of four-tenths would demand but 33,676. In 1860 the ratio of four-tenths of one per cent. required a population of 45,956, and there was 124,844, or one and nearly one-tenth per cent. In 1870, the community of Pittsburg and Allegheny numbered 199,130, being one and nearly four-tenths per cent. of the population of the West and South; the ratio of 1800 only requiring 58,322 inhabitants, that being four-tenths of one per cent. of the then population of the Southern and Western States. . . .

From 1817 to 1825, the same publication informs us Pittsburg was at a standstill, from effects produced by the termination of the War of 1812. In 1817 many factories stopped and until 1821 there was a continual drop of values in all business and property. In 1821 the distress appeared to have reached its height; manufactories, trade, and industry were all prostrated. In May the price of flour was one dollar a barrel; boards were two dollars per thousand feet; whiskey, fifteen cents a gallon; sheep and calves, one dollar per head. It required a bushel and a half of wheat



Court House.

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to buy a pound of coffee, and twelve barrels of flour to purchase a yard of superfine broadcloth.

In 1825 and 1826 a rallying era set in, and in 1830 was at full tide. In 1837 it suffered with other cities retarded by the subsidence of the land speculation fever and panic. Notwithstanding these adverse years from 1820 to 1830, there was an increase equal to 135 per cent., or  $13\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. a year; from 1830 to 1840 an increase of 129 per cent., or about 13 per cent.

In 1800 the population of that section of the Western States to which Pittsburg had access by her rivers then, and her railroads now, as well, was 385,647. In 1803 the value of the city's business was \$350,000, or 91.2 per cent. of the population which furnished her market. Having at that time, without rivalries or competition, nearly one dollar of business *per capita* with the population of the market she controlled, it might have been, perhaps, by some thought somewhat sanguine to expect that through all the growth of population, under all the rivalries of other cities and manufacturing districts that must arise, Pittsburg should continue to hold a progress equal with that growth, and maintain a trade of equal *per capita* proportions as that with which, having no competition, she started. At that time the wonderful development of the West was not conceived of. Could that development have been foreseen, and the great, active ambitious communities that have arisen, it would have been thought yet more sanguine to hope the city would keep a trade equal to one dollar *per capita* through all the competitions that would arise. But little more could be asked than that a city should grow in trade in the same ratio of increase as that of her market, especially if competitions, foreign as well as home, for the trade of that market would not only arise, but increase, within the market itself, by reason of the market's own inherent facilities and growth.

As before stated, in 1800 the trade of Pittsburg was equal to 91.2 per cent. of the population of the West. In 1810 the population of the South and West being 1,073,531, the business

of Pittsburg was, by estimates then made, \$1,000,000, or 93 per cent. In 1820 the census gives the population of the section designated at 2,541,522, while in 1817 the business of Pittsburg was stated at \$2,266,366, or a fraction short of 90 per cent. In 1830 there were in the same section of the Union 3,331,298 people, but there is no record of the value of the business of the city at that date. In 1840 the population of the Western and South-western States was 5,173,949 and in 1836 the business of Pittsburg had been shown to be \$31,146,550, being something over 600 per cent., or six dollars *per capita*, showing that the business of the city had more than kept pace in its original ratio with the population of the West.

In 1850 the population of the West was 8,419,179, and the value of the business of Pittsburg given by authorities of that date, at \$50,000,000, or about the same ratio of six dollars *per capita* as in 1840. In 1860 the population of the Western and Southern States, under comparison, was 11,498,318. Of the value of business of the community for 1860 there are no reliable figures, the census of that year of Allegheny County having been greatly deficient in comprehensiveness. In 1865, however, a private compilation of the statistics of the city, published in *Pittsburg As It Is*, before cited, shows the manufacturing and wholesale business to have been \$70,000,000, by which it is clear that the ratio of six dollars *per capita* was maintained at that date, and leaving it very probable that an increase thereon was attained in 1860. In 1870 the population of the section of the Union with whose increase the progress of the business of Pittsburg is being compared was 11,583,567; but in that last decade the trade of Pittsburg had largely found eastern as well as western markets, and the ratios of trade and inhabitants should be with eastern as well as western populations.

Pittsburg to-day covers an area of twenty-eight and one fourth square miles and its population is now about 350,000; its net public debt is \$14,023,461 and the assessed valuation \$272,716,664; the tax rate is \$1.50. The Greater Pittsburg, however, includes Allegheny, which contains eight and one half square miles, and



Phipps Conservatory.





## Pittsburg and the Mononghalea Country 111

a population of 140,000; its public debt is \$5,421,300, and its assessed valuation of taxable property \$85,601,225; the tax rate is the same as in Pittsburg.

Thus the Greater Pittsburg has a population of about half a million, where 136 years ago George Washington counted twenty poor cabins beside the Monongahela.

## Chapter VI

### The Ohio in the Revolution

THE Virginia shore of the Ohio was receiving pioneers as we have seen by the beginning of the Revolution in 1775, though they did not build their homes upon that river in its lower extremity; on the upper Ohio the Wheeling settlement was begun in 1769 and the Grave Creek settlement, the present Moundsville, West Virginia, about 1770. Fort Patrick Henry (formerly Fort Fincastle) at Wheeling was the only fort on the Ohio between Fort Pitt and "the Falls" at Louisville, where Captain Bullitt laid out a town in August, 1773, for Doctor John Connolly, commanding at Fort Pitt; and, though there are good evidences of pioneers having settled here by 1775, there is no record of a permanent establishment until General George Rogers Clark left a few families garrisoned on Corn Island above the falls in 1778 when going down to the capture of Kaskaskia and Vincennes. Though the "bottoms" along the river were almost all surveyed and patented by the outbreak of the Revolution, very few actual settlements had been made upon them on the Virginia side, and perhaps none whatever on the "Indian side," as the Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois shore of the river was long known

The rapid advance of the Virginians into this land they had "bought" from the Six Nations provoked the Shawanese on the Scioto beyond all conciliation; the barbarity of many of this first cohort of pioneers was, undoubtedly, exasperating and utterly wanton; a bloody fight was precipitated by several murders committed by the whites, particularly that perpetrated by a party under one Greathouse on drunken Indians (made drunk by the white man's "fire-water") near the mouth of Yellow Creek. The episode gave rise to a fiction which is known almost as wide as the Ohio River itself; Logan, an Indian (but not a chief), compelled a captive in his possession to write a message in gunpowder ink to Captain Cresap asking an explanation for the killing of his kindred at Yellow Creek; the message was left attached to the handle of a tomahawk at a murdered white settler's door and came into the hands of Simon Girty who translated it and passed it on to Colonel John Gibson who in turn "paraphrased the Bible and in part adopted the biblical style" and sent it to Governor Dunmore; it came then to Thomas Jefferson's hands who published it as "the greatest of Indian prose elegies."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jefferson's version of the speech was as follows: "I appeal to any white man to say if ever he entered Logan's cabin hungry and he gave him not meat, if ever he came cold and naked and he clothed him not. During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his cabin, an advocate for peace. Such was my love for the whites that my countrymen pointed as they passed and said 'Logan is the friend of white men.' I had even thought to have lived with you, but for the injuries of one man. Colonel Cresap, last spring, in cold blood and unprovoked, murdered all the relations of Logan, not even sparing my women and children. There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature. This called on me for revenge. I have sought it. I have killed many. I have fully glutted my vengeance. For my country I rejoice at the beams of peace; but do not harbor a thought

"I challenge," Jefferson said, "the whole orations of Demosthenes and Cicero . . . to produce a single passage superior. . . ." Certainly few "orations" ever contained more errors. "Colonel" (Captain) Cresap was so far distant from the Yellow Creek murder (at least fifty miles) that George Rogers Clark, when he heard of Jefferson's edition of Logan's speech, chaffed Cresap on being such a warrior that all the crimes on the frontier were laid at his door. The main part of the speech—Logan's kinlessness—was utterly false.<sup>1</sup>

The true thing in it was the revenge, for the Indians on the "Indian side" of the Ohio descended upon the Monongahela country and the settlements along the Ohio with a fury equal to anything known in the French and Indian War or Pontiac's Rebellion. The land was theirs far more than it belonged to the Six Nations who "sold" it to the Virginians, and what was known as Dunmore's War, from the Governor of Virginia, was now fought with the Shawanese in order to establish the terms of the treaty of Fort Stanwix.

The plan of campaign was extensive, and, comparatively, well executed. The Earl of Dunmore was to lead one wing of an army down the Ohio by way of Fort Pitt, while General Andrew Lewis, the tried fighter of the French and Indian War, was to lead the west wing from the point of rendezvous (the Greenbriar settlements) down Mary Ingles's route along the Great Kanawha; the consolidation of the armies was to take place near the mouth of the Great Kanawha,

that mine is the joy of **fear**. Logan never felt fear. He will not turn on his heel to save his life. Who is there to mourn for Logan? Not one!"

<sup>1</sup> See Whittlesey, *Fugitive Essays*, 143; Butterfield, *History of the Girllys*, 29; Moore, *The Northwest under Three Flags*, 191.



Logan (Tah-Gah-Jute), a Cayuga Chief.  
From an old print.

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and the Shawanese country was to be invaded. Dunmore vacillated more or less but in effect carried out his *coup*; each wing was to number about fifteen hundred men, and Dunmore had under him several able and enthusiastic men, including George Rogers Clark, Simon Kenton, Michael Cresap, and Simon Girty. This right wing set sail on the Ohio in an hundred canoes, rafts, and pirogues, and landed in what is now the State of Ohio at the mouth of the Hockhocking, where a stockade was erected.

The brilliant Shawanese leader Cornstalk gathered his warriors to the number equal to Dunmore's force, but craftily threw his legions across the Ohio to destroy Lewis's army first; the Indians would then be between Dunmore and his base of supplies. The manœuvre was typical of Indian cunning in war to be noted more at length in another chapter. Lewis's force had been raised in that scattered ring of settlements on the New, Holston, Watauga, Clinch, and Greenbrier rivers, and was composed, as Roosevelt well remarks, of as brave and stalwart class of men as "were ever got together on this continent." Every one was a borderer with a rifle proved in many a bloody skirmish or rollicking shooting match; if Cornstalk's sleek, painted warriors could rout these brown regiments Dunmore might well look with anxiety to his laurels and his scalp.

The shock of battle came suddenly when Lewis neared the mouth of the Great Kanawha—the first and last pitched battle ever fought on the immediate shore of the Ohio River. No better account of this struggle and its importance exists than Roosevelt's in his *Winning of the West*.

Instantly the drums beat to arms, and the backwoodsmen—lying out in the open, rolled in their blankets—started from the ground, looked to their flints and priming, and were ready on the moment. The general, thinking he had only a scouting party to deal with, ordered out Col. Charles Lewis and Col. Fleming, each with one hundred and fifty men. Fleming had the left, and marched up the bank of the Ohio, while Lewis, on the right, kept some little distance inland. They went about half a mile. Then, just before sunrise, while it was still dusk, the men in camp, eagerly listening, heard the reports of three guns, immediately succeeded by a clash like a peal of thin thunder, as hundreds of rifles rang out together. It was evident that the attack was serious and Col. Field was at once despatched to the front with two hundred men.

He came only just in time. At the first fire both of the scouts in front of the white line had been killed. The attack fell first, and with especial fury, on the division of Charles Lewis, who himself was mortally wounded at the very outset; he had not taken a tree, but was in an open piece of ground, cheering on his men, when he was shot. He stayed with them until the line was formed, and then walked back to camp unassisted, giving his gun to a man who was near him. His men, who were drawn up on the high ground skirting Crooked Run, began to waver, but were rallied by Fleming, whose division had been attacked almost simultaneously, until he too was struck down by a bullet. The line then gave way, except that some of Fleming's men still held their own on the left in a patch of rugged ground near the Ohio. At this moment, however, Colonel Field came up and restored the battle, while the backwoodsmen who had been left in camp also began to hurry up to take part in the fight. General Lewis at last, fully awake to the danger, began to fortify the camp by felling timber so as to form a breastwork running across the point from the Ohio to the Kanawha. This work should have been done before; and through attending to it Lewis was unable to take any personal part in the battle.

Meanwhile the frontiersmen began to push back their foes, led by Col. Field. The latter himself, however, was soon slain;





The Battle of Point Pleasant.

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he was at the time behind a great tree, and was shot by two Indians on his right, while he was trying to get a shot at another on his left, who was distracting his attention by mocking and jeering at him. The command then fell on Captain Evan Shelby, who turned his company over to the charge of his son, Isaac. The troops fought on steadily, undaunted by the fall of their leaders, while the Indians attacked with the utmost skill, caution, and bravery. The fight was a succession of single combats, each man sheltering himself behind a stump, or rock, or tree trunk, the superiority of the backwoodsmen in the use of the rifle being offset by the superiority of their foes in the art of hiding and of shielding themselves from harm. The hostile lines, though about a mile and a quarter in length, were so close together, being never more than twenty yards apart, that many of the combatants grappled in hand-to-hand fighting, and tomahawked or stabbed each other to death. The clatter of the rifles was incessant, while above the din could be heard the cries and groans of the wounded, and the shouts of the combatants, as each encouraged his own side, or jeered savagely at his adversaries. The cheers of the whites mingled with the appalling war-whoops and yells of their foes. The Indians also called out to the Americans in broken English, taunting them, and asking them why their fifes were no longer whistling—for the fight was far too close to permit of any such music. Their headmen walked up and down behind their warriors, exhorting them to go in close, to shoot straight, and to bear themselves well in the fight; while throughout the action the whites opposite Cornstalk could hear his deep, sonorous voice as he cheered on his braves, and bade them "be strong, be strong."

About noon the Indians tried to get round the flank of the whites, into their camp; but this movement was repulsed, and a party of the Americans followed up their advantage, and running along the banks of the Kanawha out-flanked the enemy in turn. The Indians being pushed very hard now began to fall back, the best fighters covering the retreat, while the wounded were being carried off; although—a rare thing in Indian battles—they were pressed so close that they were able to bear away but a portion of their dead. The whites were forced to

pursue with the greatest caution; for those of them who advanced heedlessly were certain to be ambushed and receive a smart check. Finally, about one o'clock, the Indians, in their retreat, reached a very strong position, where the underbrush was very close and there were many fallen logs and steep banks. Here they stood resolutely at bay, and the whites did not dare attack them in such a stronghold. So the action came almost to an end; though skirmishing went on until about an hour before sunset, the Indians still at times taunting their foes and calling out to them that they had eleven hundred men as well as the whites, and that to-morrow they were going to be two thousand strong. This was only bravado, however; they had suffered too heavily to renew the attack, and under cover of darkness they slipped away, and made a most skilful retreat, carrying all their wounded in safety across the Ohio. The exhausted Americans, having taken a number of scalps, as well as forty guns, and many tomahawks and some other plunder, returned to their camp.

The battle had been bloody as well as stubborn. The whites, though the victors, had suffered more than their foes, and indeed had won only because it was against the entire policy of Indian warfare to suffer a severe loss, even if a victory could be gained thereby. Of the whites, some seventy-five men had been killed or mortally wounded, and one hundred and forty severely or slightly wounded, so that they lost a fifth of their whole number. The Indians had not lost much more than half as many; about forty warriors were killed outright or died of their wounds. Among the Indians no chief of importance was slain; whereas the Americans had seventeen officers killed or wounded, and lost in succession their second, third, and fourth in command. The victors buried their own dead and left the bodies of the vanquished to the wolves and ravens. At midnight, after the battle, Col. Christian and his Fincastle men reached the ground.

The battle of the Great Kanawha was a purely American victory, for it was fought solely by the backwoodsmen themselves. Their immense superiority over regular troops in such contests can be readily seen when their triumph on this occasion

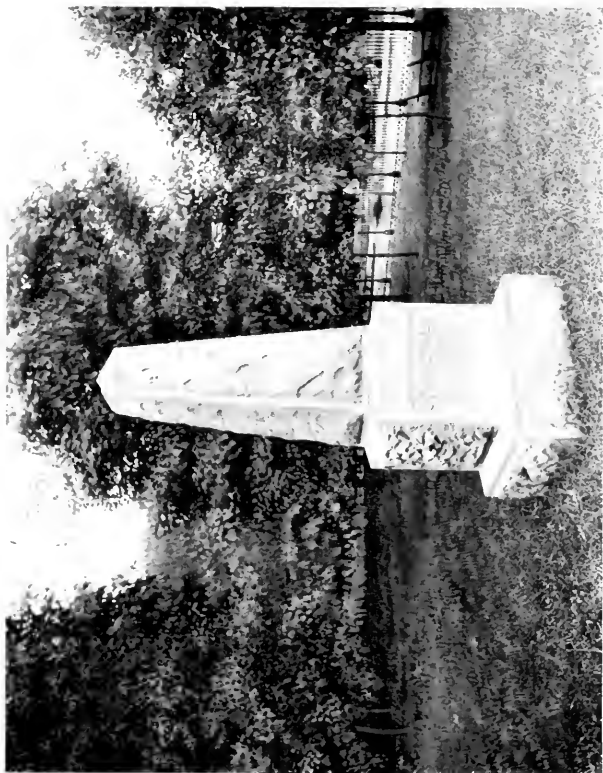
is compared with the defeats previously suffered by Braddock's grenadiers and Grant's highlanders, at the hands of the same foes. It was purely a soldiers' battle, won by hard individual fighting; there was no display of generalship, except on Cornstalk's part. It was the most closely contested of any battle ever fought with the northwestern Indians; and it was the only victory gained over a large body of them by a force but slightly superior in numbers. Both because of the character of the fight itself, and because of the results that flowed from it, it is worthy of being held in especial remembrance.<sup>1</sup>

For throughout the bloody years 1775-1783 the Ohio River was the boundary line between the advancing pioneers from the southwest and the British and Indians in the northwest; not only was it a boundary line, but also the one great avenue of ingress and egress where countless minor battles were fought on water and forest-bound shore. The American headquarters were at Fort Pitt; the British at Fort Detroit. The former attempted to neutralize the Indians in the Black Forest that lay between them, and indeed it was two years before active war in the West was begun. The Delawares on the Muskingum remained neutral until near the close of the war; the British, however, were successful in arousing the fighting blood of the Wyandots and Shawanese as early as 1777, and with them ran the offscouring of a dozen known and unknown Indian nations of the West and North, wild for the war-path and the bounty for scalps.

The principal argument of the British was the effective one of the American pioneer advance; for with the tireless, unconquerable movement of the ocean tides the line of pioneer settlements swept

<sup>1</sup> *The Winning of the West*, i., 228-233.

nearer and nearer to the Ohio each year. Here and there, of course, it wavered, as a battle-line is now and again staggered by the impetuous shock of the enemy, but when the crushing blows of the savage raids spent their force, the marvellous movement was evident in a moment's time. It is more than surprising what a large population of pioneers crept into the valleys made by the smaller tributaries of the Ohio in what is now southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia, compared with the slight population on the Ohio River itself. While Pittsburg and Wheeling were almost the only settlements worthy of the name on the upper Ohio before 1790 a score of settlements were made to the southward on the Youghiogheny, Monongahela, and Cheat rivers; the towns of Brownsville, Clarksburg, Morgantown, Washington, and Uniontown all became prominent at a very early date. It was upon Washington and Fayette counties in Pennsylvania and the Panhandle of West Virginia—the "Monongahela country"—that the first blows of the Revolution in the West were struck, while it may be said that the brunt of the struggle was borne by the Kentucky settlements, which grew steadily from 1775 to 1783. Fort Pitt was not attacked by Indians or British during the war, though officers at both Detroit and Fort Pitt laid plans to move in force upon the other. Among the hundreds of small actions that took place on the Ohio during the seven years, the attacks on Fort Henry at Wheeling in 1777 and 1782 and the defeat of Colonel David Rogers near Cincinnati in 1779 stand conspicuous as the most important fights on the river, as well as typical of the two kinds of border warfare known in the West.



The Cornstalk Monument on the Battle-field at Point Pleasant,  
West Virginia.





In 1774, five years after the Zane settlement at Wheeling was made, Fort Henry (Fincastle) was built. It lay upon the bank of the Ohio a quarter of a mile above the mouth of Wheeling Creek; in shape it was a parallelogram of square pickets pointed at the top, covering something more than half an acre; bastions and sentry boxes covered the angles;

within the fort were log barracks, an officers' house, a store-house, a well, and cabins for families. A steep hill rises not far inland; between the fort and the base of this hill the forest had been levelled, and a few log cabins were nestled in the open. Such was Wheeling in 1777.

In midsummer the neutral Delaware chieftain White Eyes came to Fort Pitt and announced that it was common talk in the Indian land that "the Indians were going to take Wheeling home." General Hand, commanding at Fort Pitt, at once warned David Shepherd, the Wheeling pioneer and lieutenant of Ohio County, to rally all the fighters of the "Panhandle" at Fort Henry. By the last of August Shepherd sent word that the fort was "Indian proof." The non-arrival of the enemy made the whites relax in vigilance, and of eleven companies that had gathered all but two departed for the interior; the two remaining were under the command of Captains Joseph Ogle and Samuel Mason.

The savage army took quick advantage of the carelessness of the borderers. On the night of the last day of August Captain Ogle with twelve scouts returned to the fort and announced that no Indians were to be found.

In the course of that night, however [writes Withers, the

historian of the borderland], the Indian army, consisting of three hundred and eighty-nine warriors, came near to the village, and believing from the lights in the fort that the inhabitants were on their guard, and that more might be effected by an ambuscade in the morning than by an immediate and direct attack, posted themselves advantageously for that purpose. Two lines were formed, at some distance from each, extending from the river across the point to the Creek, with a corn-field to afford them concealment. In the centre between these lines, near a road leading through the field to the fort, and in a situation easily exposing them to observation, six Indians were stationed, for the purpose of decoying within the lines, any force which might discover, and come out to molest them. Early in the morning of the second [more correctly, September 1st], two men, going to a field for horses, passed the first line, and came near to the Indians in the centre, before they were aware of danger. Perceiving the six savages near them, they endeavored to escape by flight. A single shot brought one of them to the ground: the other was permitted to escape that he might give the alarm. Captain Mason (who, with Captain Ogle and his party, and a few other men had occupied the fort the preceding night) hearing that there were but six of the enemy, marched with fourteen men, to the place where they had been seen. He had not preceeded far from the fort, before he came in view of them; and leading his men briskly towards where they were, soon found themselves enclosed by a body of Indians, who 'till then had remained concealed. Seeing the impossibility of maintaining a conflict with them, he endeavored to retreat with his men to the fort; but in vain. They were intercepted by the Indians, and nearly all literally cut to pieces. . . . The shrieks of Captain Mason's men, and the discharge of the guns, induced Captain Ogle to advance with his twelve scouts, to their relief. Being some distance in the rear of his men, the Indians, inclosing round them, fortunately left him without the circle, and he concealed himself. . . . The same fate awaited his men which had befallen Captain Mason's. Of the twenty-six who were led out by these two officers, only three escaped death, and two of these were badly wounded. . . .



Fort Henry Wheeling, West Virginia.



## Contrary to the popular understanding

the Indians made no attack on the fort [writes the careful Dr. Thwaites], at this time being content with their ambuscade. After throwing up some rude earthworks and blinds, scalping the dead whites, killing all the livestock within reach, and setting fire to the outlying cabins, they retired across the Ohio in the night and dispersed. Their loss was one killed and nine wounded. . . .

The second attack on Fort Henry occurred early in September, 1782, about two weeks after the terrible battle of Blue Licks in Kentucky which filled the whole West with sorrow and alarm. A ranger, John Lynn, discovered a large Indian party moving across what is now Ohio in the direction of Wheeling, but was scarcely able to bring the tidings before the savage line had flung itself upon the fort and outlying cabins. So swift was the attack that only those living in the immediate vicinity of Fort Henry were able to gain the walls; and only a score of men were about at the time to assume the defence of the place. The cabin of Colonel Ebenezer Zane, situated some forty yards from the walls, contained a quantity of ammunition sent by the Governor of Virginia for the defence of the fort and Zane chose to hold the enemy at bay from the loopholes of this outpost. The redskins advanced with a British flag waving over them and their summons to Colonel Zane to surrender his cabin was answered by a burst of musketry which levelled the flag they bore. Twice they attempted to storm the cabin, but each time a withering fire drove them back and night put an end to the first day's "siege." In the night an attempt was made to fire the cabin, but Zane's

negro man Sam was on watch and wounded the Indian carrying the torch.

All efforts having failed, the Indians accidentally hit upon another plan which adds a humorous tinge to an otherwise desperate story. A boat filled with cannon balls en route from Fort Pitt to Corn Island, at Louisville, put in at dusk on the first day of the siege. The man in charge was assailed by the Indians but managed to reach the fort, though his boat and cargo fell into the hands of his pursuers. In desperation the Indians resolved to attempt to reduce the fort by means of the captured cannon balls. And on the morrow the watchers saw through the rising fogs a strange weapon trained upon them—a cannon made out of the bole of a hollow tree, closely wrapped by chains from a forge or shop that stood on the outskirts of the village. The “cannon” was heavily loaded with powder and ball, and, when all was ready, a brave applied the match. After the smoke had blown away the explosion was found to have killed several Indians and a number more were wounded by the slivers that were blown in every direction with terrific force.

Enraged now beyond all description they attacked the fort again and again, but were successively driven away until at last the ammunition within the fort began to be exhausted. It finally became necessary to send one of the few defenders across the open to the Zane cabin to procure an additional supply of powder.

Among those who volunteered [writes Withers] to go on this enterprise, was Elizabeth, the younger sister of Colonel Zane. She was then young, active and athletic;—with precipitancy

to dare danger, and fortitude to sustain her in the midst of it. Disdaining to weigh the hazard of her own life, against the risk of that of others, when told that a man would encounter less danger by reason of his greater fleetness, she replied, "And should he fall his loss would be more severely felt. You have not one man to spare; a woman will not be missed in the defence of the fort." Her services were accepted. Divesting herself of some of her garments, as tending to impede her progress, she stood prepared for the hazardous adventure; and when the gate was opened, she bounded forth with the buoyancy of hope and in the confidence of success. Wrapt in amazement, the Indians beheld her spring forward; and only exclaiming "a squaw, a squaw," no attempt was made to interrupt her progress. Arrived at the door, she proclaimed her embassy. Colonel Zane fastened a table cloth around her waist, and emptying into it a keg of powder, again she ventured forth. The Indians were no longer passive. Ball after ball passed whizzing and innocuous by. She reached the gate and entered the fort in safety. . . . During that night and the next day, the Indians still maintained the siege, and made frequent attempts to take the fort by storm; but they were invariably repulsed by the deadly fire of the garrison and the few brave men in Colonel Zane's house. On the third night, despairing of success, they resolved on raising the siege; and leaving one hundred chosen warriors to scour and lay waste the country, the remainder of their army retreated across the Ohio. . . .

These two "sieges" of Wheeling were the only instances of note throughout the war in which the savages invested any of the few forts upon the river. Fort Randolph did not entirely escape notice but it was never besieged closely. Fort McIntosh, erected by General Lachlan McIntosh in the spring of 1778 at the mouth of Big Beaver Creek, twenty-six miles below Fort Pitt, was the first and only fort built during the Revolution on the "Indian side" of the Ohio; it was never threatened by the savages.





the last extremity. The voice sounded nearer, this time an exclamation of impatience and distress which could proceed from none but a Kentuckian:

"Whoever you are," were the beseeching words, "for God's sake answer me." And at the words a borderer, shot through both arms, came into sight. The comrades were unspeakably pleased each to find the other, for between them they had a pair of arms and a pair of legs and therefore some hope of life and escape. As best he could, Benham dressed all the wounds and then proceeded to cook some food; all that could be done with arms and hands Benham did, cooking, loading and firing the gun. His comrade, having the rims of a hat placed between his teeth by Benham, waded into the river and secured sufficient water for their needs; he also drove wild turkeys near enough to Benham to allow him to bring some down, and then he kept tossing them with the toe of his boot toward "camp" until they were within Benham's reach; by the same means he kept his partner supplied with wood. When the wounds healed and the men could travel they camped at the mouth of Licking River in the hope of being picked up by a passing flat-boat. Near the last of November a boat was hailed and, though it took some time to prove they were not such savages as their appearance indicated, they were taken aboard and carried to Louisville.

In point of numbers concerned and fatalities these actions which we have described were the most important "battles" fought immediately on the Ohio River; and together with the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 (which far exceeded them in respect to numbers and importance) comprise all the battles fought

in pioneer days within sight of this great river. This fact is significant, for it shows how small and how scattered the settlements on the Ohio were during the era of the Indian wars. The engagements here described are, however, typical of the other conflicts fought away from the river in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio. An hundred and one blockhouses where the people of the different neighborhoods "forted" in times of danger were invested as was Fort Henry, and frequently without even the hasty warning brought in that instance by Lynn, the scout. In times of danger bodies of rangers and scouts patrolled the forests and watched the trails of the so-called "pathless wilderness" with unwearying caution.

The first attack on Wheeling and the surprise of Rogers's boatmen are both typical of the style of Indian warfare with which the pioneers of the Ohio had to contend and which they were very slow to match. "War" in white men's comprehension meant a contest of strength and bravery; not so with the red man. To the Indian, war meant a contest of cunning and deceit. The Indians seldom if ever risked a struggle in the open on equal terms; in a few instances Indians gave battle from behind breastworks of trees and vines as at Point Pleasant and Fallen Timber—both of which they lost. The greatest battles won by the red men in the West were Braddock's and St. Clair's defeats where cunning played a greater part than strength, both white armies being allowed to entrap themselves before the Indian offered battle. As in the larger, so in the minor conflicts trickery was ever the Indian's method; and a large volume would not contain a complete enumeration of all the Indian's arts to induce



McCullough's Leap.



the white invaders to attempt an unequal struggle.

For this peculiarly interesting mode of warfare the savage had been long in training before ever a white man crossed the Alleghanies; the tricks played on the whites in the Ohio Valley had been played for generations by the warring Indian nations upon each other. Of course the commonest sort of lure offered to the whites was the use of a small band of Indians as a decoy, as was successfully done both at Wheeling on the occasion of the first "siege," and at Rogers's defeat near Cincinnati, if the Indians floating out of the Little Miami be considered such, as they no doubt were. Other decoys were employed, particularly the call of the turkey and other birds and animals; sometimes trinkets were dropped in the trail with an ambuscade laid within musket range; in the case of the terrible battle of Blue Licks, it will be remembered, the Indians left their camp around Fort Boonesborough with such precipitation that meat was left on the spits and discarded garments were strewn along the route—all treacherously planned decoys that cost Kentucky the bravest of her brave. In intertribal Indian wars it is known that attacking braves have gone so far as to cut off buffalo hoofs and tie them to their feet in order to lure their foes into the mouths of their hidden guns; and one party of Indians, at least, feigned a hasty retreat, and after making plain the route they pursued, fastened a large number of sharply pointed sticks in the ground the tips of which had been anointed with poison from rattlesnakes' fangs.

If the captive of many years among the Indians, Colonel James Smith, is to be believed, the whites underestimated the Indian as a warrior.

I have often heard [he wrote] the British officers call the Indians the undisciplined savages, which is a capital mistake—as they have all the essentials of discipline. They are under good command, and punctual in obeying orders: they can act in concert, and when the officers lay a plan and give orders, they will cheerfully unite in putting all their orders into immediate execution; and by each man observing the motion or movement of his right hand companion, they can communicate the motion from right to left, and march abreast in concert, and in scattered order, though the line may be more than a mile long, and continue, if occasion requires, for a considerable distance, without disorder or confusion. They can perform various necessary manœuvres, either slowly, or as fast as they can run: they can form a circle, or semi-circle. . . . They can also form a large hollow square, face out and take trees: this they do, if their enemies are about surrounding them, to prevent from being shot from either side of the tree. . . . They had no aid [from French or British] when they fought even the Virginia rifle-men almost a whole day, at the great Kanawha, in the year 1774; and when they found they could not prevail against the Virginians, they made a most artful retreat. Notwithstanding they had the Ohio to cross, some continued firing, whilst others were crossing the river; in this manner they proceeded until they all got over, before the Virginians knew that they had retreated; and in this retreat they carried off all their wounded.

Many of the important campaigns of the Revolution were in a slight way connected with the Ohio River; being the boundary line each army of invasion crossed and recrossed it and more than one white army rendezvoused upon its shores. There was no method and much madness to the war in the West; one after another the Indian raiders urged their horses across the Ohio from the upper Muskingum, the Scioto, the Miami, and the Sandusky upon Virginia and Kentucky, and soon, in retaliation, a frenzied mob of borderers invaded Ohio. It is said that the popu-

lation of Kentucky doubled each year of the war after 1776, Boonesborough, Danville, Crab Orchard, Lexington, and a score of intermediate "stations" receiving accretions constantly by way of the Ohio and the "Wilderness Road" through Cumberland Gap. Led by the desperate renegades, the Girty boys, the Indians by their raids angered the Long Knives of Virginia and Kentucky to deeds that were as despicable as they seem to have been delightful to the perpetrators. Yet slowly and surely the attacks of the whites on the Indian towns on the Muskingum and Scioto had their effect; when the fields of Indian corn (maize) were destroyed the Indians were driven to desperate straits for provisions and slowly drifted in a northwesterly direction toward the British posts at Sandusky and Detroit. During the last years of the war (1780-1783) the upper Muskingum, Scioto, and Miami were comparatively deserted and the Long Knives under Crawford and under Clark were striking at the northwest corner of what is now Ohio, where the Indians were to make their last desperate stand for their old hunting-grounds.

The one brilliantly successful campaign of the Revolution in the West was the conquest of Illinois by the daring Virginian youth George Rogers Clark. Clark was a typical Kentuckian adventurer with blood and courage honestly inherited from his ancestors in Virginia. He first appeared, just turned of age, on the upper Ohio two years before the outbreak of the Revolution, spending a winter on the bank of the Ohio near the Tomlinson settlement at the present Moundsville, West Virginia. In 1774 he saw military life in Dunmore's army that marched into the Shawanese country.

At the beginning of the Revolution the pioneers then occupying the "County of Kentucky" elected two members to the Virginia Assembly, one being George Rogers Clark. The lad auspiciously made much of his opportunities; realizing that the British posts in Illinois, Kaskaskia, and Vincennes (Indiana), were responsible for much of the success of the Indian raids of 1777 on the Kentucky stations, he resolved to get the necessary encouragement from Virginia to invade Illinois and capture the two forts.

Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, believed in and agreed with the intrepid lad. With an order on the commander at Fort Pitt for necessities of the daring expedition, Clark came to the head of the Ohio early in 1778, and securing boats for his company of men set sail on the river for the Falls at Louisville. Here on Corn Island, as we have noted, he established a little colony where he trained and prepared for the invasion to the northward. With less than two hundred hardy men he left Corn Island June 24, 1778, in boats for the lower Ohio. In four days the mouth of the Tennessee River was reached and on an island here in the Ohio the little "army" encamped. Just below them was the site of an old French fort, Fort Massac, on the present site of Metropolis, Massac County, Illinois. The spot had been a strategic one on the lower Ohio because it was the natural rendezvous of Indians, Indian traders, and Jesuit missionaries who wished to pass from the country north of the Ohio up either the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers. From here as well as from Shawneetown, just above, ran several overland trails toward the French settlements, Kaskaskia on the Kaskaskia River





General George Rogers Clark.

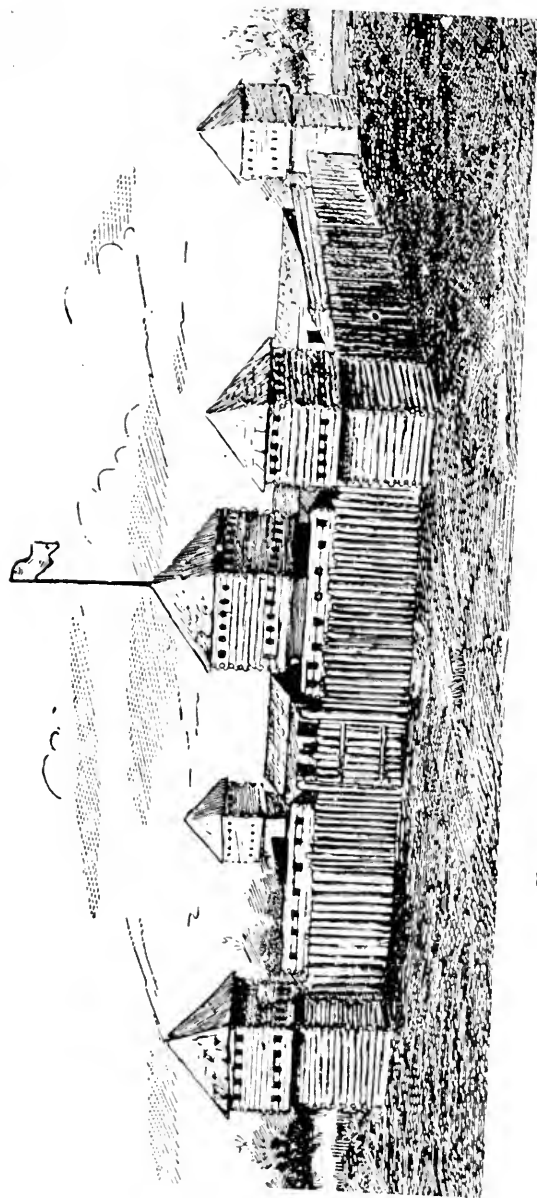
1881  
1882  
1883

and Vincennes on the Wabash. Another trail ran from the present Evansville, Indiana, still higher up the Ohio, to Vincennes, as well as a trail from the present Cincinnati to Vincennes. Clark passed all the upper trails, and, acting probably on the advice of spies sent out previously, came down to the lowest, and therefore the shortest, route toward the British fort at Kaskaskia. From a canoeful of traders found at the mouth of the Tennessee he secured guides to lead him one hundred and twenty miles across the prairies and "points" of timber in Illinois along the Kaskaskia Trace.

Disembarking in Massac Creek the daring adventurer strode away at the head of his men to the heart of the enemy's country; neither the fort at Kaskaskia nor Fort Sackville at Vincennes were strong or strongly manned, but they had worked already great evil to Kentucky and threatened to do more. The British here under the general command of Governor Hamilton at Detroit had encouraged the Indians to ravage the country south of the Ohio; along that river they had laid a thousand pitfalls for the advancing whites, and it was plain that the Kentuckians must master these Illinois rendezvous or succumb to them. As this little band now left the Ohio the memory of a score of Indian outrages made them desperately cautious and desperately determined. One thing was sure, or practically sure; could they reach Kaskaskia undiscovered there was little question that they could surprise and take the town. So they hastened onward through Massac, Johnson, Williamson, Jackson, and Randolph counties to near Diamond Cross where the Kaskaskia Trace joined the old Vincennes Trace

north of Kaskaskia. On the night of July 3d they lay on St. Mary's River and on the "glorious fourth" came with a rush on the staid little town, frightening the French *habitans* out of their wits and taking Governor Rochblave prisoner in his own apartments.

The French of the town expected to be quite eaten alive; the British had represented that the Americans were every bit as bloodthirsty as the most ferocious savages. This lying policy had the effect of a boomerang; Clark at once took the utmost pains to treat them kindly. Instead of finding the Virginians fiends the French found them more friendly than the English had ever been, and, in a short time, were far from sorry that they came. Clark was fortunately able to augment this feeling tenfold by circulating the information of the friendly attitude of the French government to the struggling colonies, it having just then recognized the American Republic. Thus a feeling of favor spread throughout the French settlements and finally the French at Vincennes, led by a priest, Gabault, held out open arms to Clark and his cause. In response Lieutenant Leonard Helm was sent to occupy that important post. The result is well known: the British commander, Hamilton, at Detroit, made his difficult way up the Maumee and down the Wabash, recapturing Vincennes and the American force stationed there. The winter of 1778-79 came on with Clark on the Mississippi and Hamilton on the Wabash, each preparing to oust the other and both watchful and determined. The winter rains and snows compelled each to keep his quarters, but when the spring floods subsided Hamilton proposed to move on Kaskaskia and perhaps attack Kentucky itself.



Fort Sackville in Vincennes, Indiana, 1779.  
From an old print.



Many deeds of arms have been sung in song and told in eloquent prose which are not found to be based on fact when subjected to rigid investigation. But this is not true of the daring, brilliant exploit now attempted by Clark; the more this is studied the more interesting and wonderful does it appear. Estimating the situation with great sagacity the Virginian saw that his chance of victory hung on the narrow thread of surprising Vincennes before Hamilton could get ready to surprise him. The February floods were as high as they ever were, but there was courage too—and never did courage run higher in time of war than here and now among Clark's men and the excitable Frenchmen, who were electrified at the astonishing plan.

On the 7th of February the company of one hundred and seventy men—little more than half of Washington's force at Fort Necessity—set out on the perilous march across Illinois. A galley-bateau, the *Willing*, had been fitted out to carry additional food, clothing, and ammunition by water to Vincennes. The rivers were running out of banks; the prairies were brimming; but in fifteen days the American force, drenched and desperately wearied, flung themselves at Fort Sackville and captured Hamilton and his men. The terrible march through the "Drowned Lands" of the Wabash had been indescribably taxing; the troops were ferried over the Wabash and marched for miles through standing water. But their leader had been ever at their head, making sport of the fatiguing hardships and luring the men on rapidly to their goal.

There is no minimizing the heroism of George Rogers Clark's conquest of Illinois nor of the effects of that conquest; the Indians of the Wabash and Lake

regions no longer hovered about Fort Sackville to be urged upon Kentucky by British officers. True, the Kentucky stations were attacked, and savagely, but without avail; no British-Indian army established a foothold south of the Ohio River, and the grasp Clark secured in Illinois never relaxed. Virginia immediately took control of the region north of the Ohio and retained it until all but the Virginia Military Grant, in Ohio, was surrendered to the general government.



## Chapter VII

### The Fighting Virginians

WHILE in the larger aspect the immediate Ohio shores saw comparatively few battles, in or before the Revolution, that take rank so far as numbers or killed and wounded are concerned, yet it can be said with as much truth as the words usually contain that its waters ran red with blood throughout a score of years of border war. The battles for the valley and the battles which brought about its conquest were the numberless desperate conflicts between descending pioneers and the aborigines on the Indian side. For it was sure that if Kentucky and what is now Pennsylvania and West Virginia could once be thickly populated by a race of hardy people the conquest of the West was a foregone conclusion.

And so it came about that the flatboat floating down-stream from the Monongahela country filled with pioneers, their horses and cattle, and the implements of husbandry, was quite as significant as if it bore a battalion of infantry or a consignment of small arms and cannon. And while it was a desperately daring thing to set sail on the upper Ohio at any time during these years of war, it was also a daring adventure to attempt to challenge and stop the pioneers.

But there was seemingly no end to the stream of emigration, and any Indian party lying low on the dark shores of the Ohio were sure that they would not have to wait long until yet another boat would float slowly into sight.

All the savage tricks ever perpetrated on land to lure white men to their fate were employed here again on the water, and many never known on land were here conceived and executed. Desperate little battles amid-stream, hard hand-to-hand struggles in the water where each antagonist sought to maim and drown the other, bloody running fights along the drift-strewn shadowy shores, savage attacks on riffles where boats were aground, or at the lower outer bank at a bend in the river where boats floated toward the shore, swift encounters in the night with boats heard in the dark but not seen, attacks at the first gray dawn of day (the Indian's favorite time for battle)—all these and more are a part of the wild story of the real conquest of the Ohio River.

Before attempting to describe some typical conflicts of this sort it is necessary first to notice the river craft of the time—the heavy unwieldy “men-of-war,” in which the “silent pioneer” fought his lonely battle. The explorers and surveyors of the Ohio found the great river easily navigated in calm weather by the light canoes of the savage. The Canoe Age of Ohio River history began with Indian occupation of the valley and may be said to have lasted until the close of the Revolutionary War in 1783; of course canoes and their modern substitutes, skiffs and “John-boats,” still serve their useful part, but at about the year mentioned the rush of emigration had been so great

that the longest and deepest canoes could no longer meet the needs of an awakening empire. What the packhorse had brought over the Alleghenies the canoe could transport to any point on the Ohio or its tributaries; but the loads of the heavy Conestoga freighters demanded longer and more substantial craft.

Thus the day of the keelboat and flatboat dawned. There were as many styles and designs of these historic vessels as human ingenuity and human exigency could call forth. The illustrations here given are typical of the great majority. The average keelboat was some fifty feet in length by ten or twelve feet in width; the body of the boat was boarded over and would hold several wagon-loads of freight. Along the sides of the boat were "running-boards" along which the "crew" walked while propelling it; placing their "setting-poles" at the bottom of the stream or on a projecting log or rock, the men walked down the running-boards, the poles braced against their shoulders. Thus the keelboat was the first craft after the canoe which was made to ascend rapid streams; anything from a raft to a houseboat would float down, but not one craft in a thousand that went down the Ohio ever came back again. The "setting-pole" method of propelling a boat was of course useless in deep water; but it was so successful in general that that first of ingenious men to attempt to build a boat that could be run by mechanism, James Rumsey, experimented with and perfected a boat that would, literally, "walk in the water" according to the setting-pole idea.

The principal craft of the pioneer era, however, was the flatboat or barge; the "broadhorn" was a common name for it; if called a "Kentucky

broadhorn," its destination was along the Ohio River; if called a "New Orleans broadhorn," the destination was known to be on the Mississippi River, and the craft was (supposedly) a little heavier and more strongly put together. As a house may be anything from a tottering shack to a millionaire's mansion, so the flatboat or barge may have been anything from a creaking raft with a drygoods box on it to a strong, roomy house with a little barn in the rear. The names barge and flatboat were used almost synonymously, but technically speaking a flatboat was a raft with a house on it while a barge was a square, tub-like boat with a cabin in the centre; the latter barges were, of course, roofed over. But the two species of boat on the Ohio River which in a few years' time brought a whole nation into the wilderness of the West were the raft with a lean-to or tent in the centre, or the huge, deep, square box called a barge. It is with these boats with human freight that we are now to be immediately concerned, for there had to be a people on the Ohio before freight-craft became common.

If there was one sort of fighting on the Ohio more typical of the flatboat era than another it was an encounter between whites on board a boat and Indians along the shore near which the boat had drifted or been brought by means of a decoy. It was rare that Indians ventured into the river to attack a boat on even terms. All their cunning arts centred here—in luring emigrants to shore; and, having noted their method of war on land, it is interesting to continue the study as it applies to the river itself.

The most successful ruse, perhaps, employed to make boats on the Ohio put to shore was by com-

pling renegades or white captives to act as decoys; these unfortunate and sometimes treacherous persons among the Indians would appear at the water's edge and implore to be saved by passing boats. John May, in whose honor Maysville, Kentucky, was named, was killed in a battle which came about through renegade white decoys. Embarking on a flat at Kelly's Station on the Great Kanawha, in company with his clerk Johnson and a trader named Skiles, Point Pleasant on the Ohio was reached without incident. Here they were joined by a man named Flinn and two sisters by the name of Fleming. At daylight on the morning after leaving Point Pleasant, Flinn, who was on watch, awakened the whole crew with a cry of alarm. Far down the river the smoke of a large fire could be seen drifting above the trees and out over the water. Just as May had decided upon which shore the fire was and was heading for the opposite (Virginia) side two white men came down to the water's edge on the "Indian side" and implored to be taken aboard; they told when and where they had been taken captive, how they effected their escape, and added that the Indians were hard on their trail. The veteran May remained unmoved at the story and when he asked the reason of the fire and smoke and received a reply from the whites denying any knowledge of a fire he scoffed at them. While the parley was taking place the boat was kept amid-stream in the current and the white decoys ran along the shore continuing their well-feigned lamentations. These affected the Fleming women and also Flinn, who at last proposed to May to land and let the whites aboard. The request was refused but after a time, through the

entreaties of the women and Flinn, May agreed to run near enough to shore to allow Flinn to wade ashore and interview the two men. But this was not done until the boat had floated a mile beyond the decoys who, probably, were stopped by the impassable nature of the river bank.

However, the moment Flinn's foot touched shore, several Indians, well-nigh breathless from the exhausting run of miles in the forest, stepped out and seized him and opened fire on the boat. Johnson and Skiles sprang to their guns, but May, knowing that the current in the middle of the river was their one hope of escape, leaped to his oar. He called the others to leave the guns and help him but the rain of bullets made it impossible to remain in range and the men sank behind shelter. The boat lay still in the backwater, and the Indians, wary of approaching, kept up a continuous fire. One of the women received a bullet in her mouth and fell dead; Skiles was shot through both shoulders; when at last May arose and swung his night-cap over his head in sign of surrender, he received a bullet fair in the centre of his forehead and fell dead in his tracks. Soon the Indians came out to the boat and, boarding her, ostentatiously shook hands with the two unhurt voyageurs, as well as with the writhing Skiles, and coolly scalped the dead and plundered the cargo. The entire party, savages, renegades, and captives, spent the night on the beach.

In the morning plans were laid to await more boats, for with May's boat in their possession they were masters of the situation. And sure enough three flat-boats soon rounded into view, in charge of Captain



The Cheat River at Historic "Dunkard's Bottom"





Thomas Marshall, of the Virginia Line, and son. Instantly the pioneers were ordered to man the oars and the boat was headed for the first of those coming down-stream. In each of Marshall's boats preparations were made both to withstand and escape the attack; all hands bent hard at the oars. Being in the centre of the current their rate of speed was rapid, and, amid a fierce fusillade, the first and then the second boat got by the Indians' craft; Marshall himself commanded the last boat and while the Indians attempted to cross the river to it they got out of the current; the whites then made a dexterous manoeuvre to save the last boat. The second allowed the third to catch up and, the passengers being transferred, the boat and its freight was set adrift and all hands bent to the oars to overtake the first boat. This being overtaken all entered it and cast the second boat and cargo adrift. Such now was the number of oars and rowers available that the entire party in a short time distanced the Indian boat and escaped; in all this they were favored by their countrymen in May's boat who purposely rowed with as uneven stroke as possible which consequently made their progress through the water slower though to all appearances they were exerting every effort at their sad task.

This method of using white prisoners as decoys resulted in making all pioneer boats shun the whites that hailed them from the river shores as they would have shunned Indians themselves; as a consequence many whites escaping from the Indians in the interior were pitifully refused succor and left to die. Some succeeded finally in making known their true identity. Colonel Timothy Downing was such an one,

being captured near Blue Licks by Shawanese while returning from Lexington. For two days the prisoner was marched into the Indian country north of the Ohio by an old Indian and his son by whose hands the party that captured him were sending him to a certain Indian village. As they encamped at the end of the second day and the old Indian came to tie Downing he said:

"Tie to-night; after to-night, no more tie."

"No tie," replied the prisoner, "till after supper."

The Indian assented and then directed Downing to fetch a drink of water. As he went Downing picked up a tomahawk and hid it under his arm. As the old Indian took the water Downing brained him in his tracks. The young savage leaped at his back, but was wounded and the prisoner made off. Reaching the Scioto River he followed it to the Ohio and soon a flatboat came by. In vain did the poor fugitive plead to be taken on board; the boat instantly put for the opposite shore. In desperation Downing ran along the shores for two miles endeavoring in every way to conquer the suspicion of the flatboatmen. At last he succeeded so far as to induce one of the crew to come over to him in a canoe.

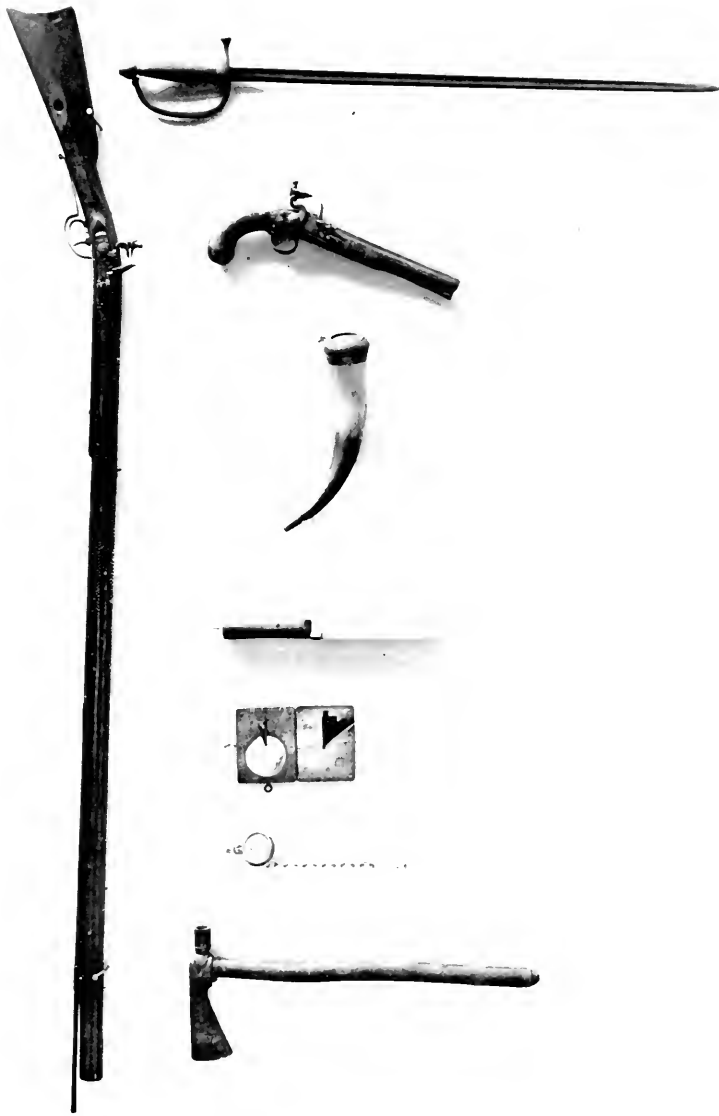
"If I see an Indian," said his savior, training his gun on Downing all the time as he approached the shore, "I'll shoot you dead in your tracks." He saw none, and the Colonel was taken aboard and saved.

One of the most remarkable river fights occurred a little below the mouth of the Great Kanawha between a force of three hundred or more Indians and two boats under the command of Captain William Hubbell, a Revolutionary veteran of Vermont, then

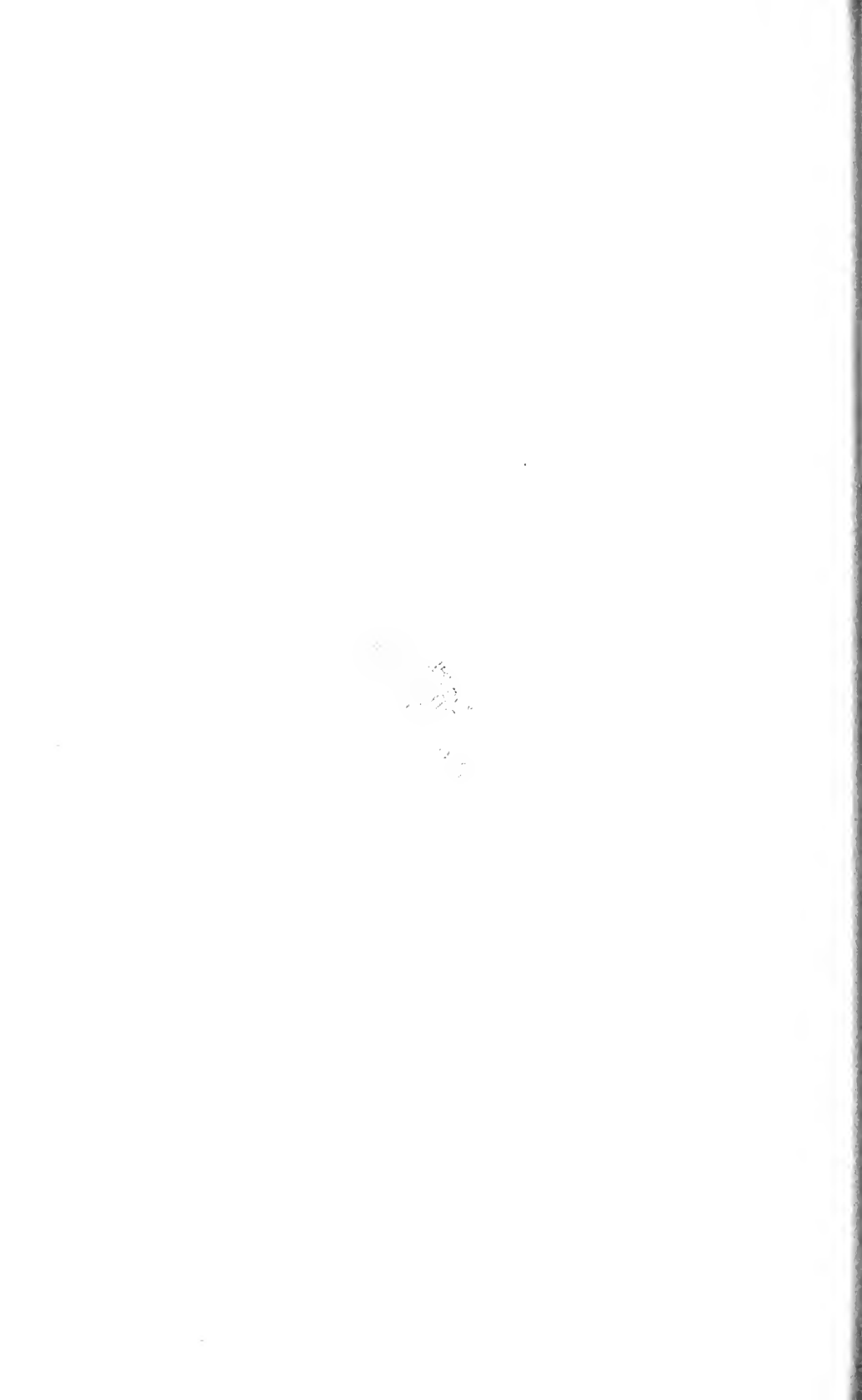
returning from the East to his newly erected home in Kentucky. A flatboat had been secured on the Monongahela and Captain Hubbell embarked in company with Daniel Light and William Plascut and wife and eight children. On the way down the river the party was increased by the addition of Messrs. Stoner, Ray, Tucker, Kilpatrick and two daughters, and an Irishman and Dutchman whose names were not remembered. The story of the fight is thus told by the *Western Review* of August, 1819, plainly the account of one of the survivors:

The nine men were divided into three watches for the night, who were alternately to continue awake and be on the lookout for two hours at a time. The arms on board, which consisted principally of old muskets much out of order, were collected, loaded, and put in the best possible condition for service. At about sunset that day . . . our party overtook a fleet of six boats descending the river in company, and intended to have continued with them; but as their passengers seemed more disposed to dancing than fighting, and, as, soon after dark notwithstanding the remonstrances of Captain Hubbell, they commenced fiddling and dancing instead of preparing their arms and taking the necessary rest . . . it was wisely considered more hazardous to be in such company than to be alone. . . . One of the boats belonging to the fleet commanded by a Captain Greathouse adopted the same plan, and for a while kept up with Captain Hubbell . . . [who] steadily proceeded forward *alone*. Early in the night a canoe was dimly seen floating down the river . . . it was now agreed . . . every man should be up before the dawn, in order to make as great a show as possible of numbers and of strength; and that, whenever the action should take place, the women and children should lie down on the cabin floor and be protected as well as they could by the trunks and other baggage, which might be placed around them. . . . Just as daylight began to appear in the east, and before the men were up and at their posts agreeably to

arrangement, a voice at some distance below them in a plaintive tone repeatedly solicited them to come on shore, as there were some white persons who wished to obtain a passage in their boat. This the captain very naturally and correctly concluded to be an Indian artifice, and its only effect was to rouse the men and place every one on his guard. The voice of entreaty was soon changed into the language of indignation and insult, and the sound of distant paddles announced the approach of the savage foe. At length three Indian canoes were seen through the mists of the morning rapidly advancing. With the utmost coolness the captain and his companions prepared to receive them. The chairs, tables, and other incumbrances were thrown into the river, in order to clear the deck for action. Every man took his position, and was ordered not to fire till the savages had approached so near, that (to use the words of Captain Hubbell), "the flash from the guns might singe their eyebrows"; and a special caution was given that the men should fire successively, so that there might be no interval. On the arrival of the canoes, they were found to contain about twenty-five or thirty Indians each. As soon as they approached within the reach of musket shot, a general fire was given from one of them, which wounded Mr. Tucker through the hips so severely that his leg hung only by the flesh, and shot Mr. Light just below the ribs. The three canoes placed themselves at the bow, stern, and on the right side of the boat, so that they had an opportunity of raking in every direction. The fire now commenced from the boat, and had a powerful effect in checking the confidence and fury of the Indians. The captain, after firing his own gun, took up that of one of the wounded men, raised it to his shoulder, and was about to discharge it, when a ball came and took away the lock; he coolly turned round, seized a brand of fire from the kettle which served for a caboose [stove], and applying it to the pan, discharged the piece with effect. A very regular and constant fire was now kept up on both sides. The captain was just in the act of raising his gun for a third time, when a ball passed through his right arm, and for a moment disabled him. Scarcely had he recovered from the shock and re-acquired the use of his hand, which had been



The Rifle, Tomahawk, Watch, Pocket Compass and Sun-dial, Hunting Knife, Powder Horn, Pistol, and Sword of General George Rogers Clark, now Owned by Colonel R. T. Durrett, Louisville, Ky.



suddenly *drawn up* by the wound, when he discovered the Indians in one of the canoes just about to board the boat in the bow, where the horses were placed belonging to the party. So near had they approached, that some of them had actually seized with their hands the side of the boat. Severely wounded as he was, he caught up a pair of horseman's pistols, and rushed forward to repel the attempt at boarding. On his approach the Indians fell back, and he discharged a pistol with effect at the foremost man. After firing the second pistol he found himself without arms, and was compelled to retreat; but stepping back upon a pile of small wood which had been prepared for burning in the kettle, the thought struck him that it might be made use of in repelling the foe, and he continued for some time to strike them with it so forcibly and actively that they were unable to enter the boat, and at length he wounded one of them so severely that with a yell they suddenly gave way. All the canoes instantly discontinued the contest and directed their course to Captain Greathouse's boat, which was then in sight. Here a striking contrast was exhibited to the firmness and intrepidity which had been displayed. Instead of resisting the attack, the people on board of this boat retired to the cabin in dismay. The Indians entered it without opposition, and rowed it to the shore, where they instantly killed the captain and a lad of about fourteen years of age. The women they placed in the centre of their canoes, and manning them with fresh hands, again pursued Captain Hubbell and party. A melancholy alternative now presented itself to these brave but almost desponding men, either to fall a prey to the savages themselves, or to run the risk of shooting the women, who had been placed in the canoes in the hope of deriving protection from their presence. But "self-preservation is the first law of nature," and the captain very justly remarked, there would not be much humanity in preserving their lives at such a sacrifice, merely that they might become victims of savage cruelty at some subsequent period.

There were now but four men left on board of Captain Hubbell's boat, capable of defending it, and the captain himself was severely wounded in two places. The second attack, however, was

resisted with almost incredible firmness and vigor. Whenever the Indians would rise to fire, their opponents would commonly give them the first shot, which in almost every instance would prove fatal. Notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, and the exhausted condition of the defenders of the boat, the Indians at length appeared to despair of success, and the canoes successively retired to the shore. . . . Unfortunately the boat now drifted near to the shore where the Indians were collected, and a large concourse, probably between four and five hundred, were seen rushing down on the bank. Ray and Plascut, the only men remaining unhurt, were placed at the oars, and as the boat was not more than twenty yards from shore, it was deemed prudent for all to lie down in as safe a position as possible and attempt to push forward with the utmost practicable rapidity. While they continued in this situation, nine balls were shot into one oar, and ten into the other, without wounding the rowers, who were hidden from view and protected by the side of the boat and the blankets in its stern. During this dreadful exposure to the fire of the savages, which continued about twenty minutes, Mr. Kilpatrick observed a particular Indian, whom he thought a favorable mark for his rifle, and, notwithstanding the solemn warning of Captain Hubbell, rose to shoot him. He immediately received a ball in his mouth, which passed out at the back part of his head, and was almost at the same moment shot through the heart. . . . The boat was now providentially and suddenly carried out into the middle of the stream, and taken by the current beyond the range of the enemy's balls. . . . Thus ended this awful conflict, in which, out of nine men, two only escaped unhurt. Tucker and Kilpatrick were killed on the spot, Stoner was mortally wounded, and died on his arrival at Limestone [Maysville, Kentucky], and all the rest, excepting Ray and Plascut, were severely wounded. The women and children were all uninjured, excepting a little son of Mr. Plascut, who, after the battle was over, came to the captain, and, with great coolness, requested him to take a bullet out of his head. On examination, it appeared that a bullet, which had passed through the side of the boat, had penetrated the forehead of this little hero, and remained



under the skin. . . . On examination, it was found that the sides of the boat were literally filled with bullets and bullet holes. There was scarcely a space of two feet square, in the part above water, which had not either a ball remaining in it, or a hole through which a ball had passed. Some persons who had the curiosity to count the number of holes in the blankets which were hung up as curtains [evidently in the interlude] in the stern of the boat, affirmed that in the space of five feet square there were one hundred and twenty-two.

Certain points in the Indians' method of conducting this engagement are worthy of notice: it is clear that they first attempted to inveigle the boats ashore in the mists of the morning, for once there the conquest could have ended only in victory for them; what has been said concerning Indians obeying orders and acting in unison is illustrated by their accord in all leaving Hubbell's boat at "a yell" and turning their attention to the Greathouse boat; their desperate trick of attacking Hubbell again in canoes carrying the women taken from the other boat was exceedingly clever though unsuccessful; and when Hubbell's boat neared shore their firing at the oars was not so accidental as is implied in the narrative, since it was only by means of oars that the pioneers could get out of the backwater into the current to safety. The incident of Hubbell's fighting the rascals with blocks of firewood is typical of a large number of similar encounters in the borderland when guns had been emptied or when the antagonists were at close quarters. Were every incident of border warfare known it is probable that almost every known object that could be thrown or swung has been employed to resist the sudden onslaught of the red foe in the West. It is on record that a Kentucky boy gathering vegetables in

his father's garden saved his own life by almost braining an Indian with a squash. On another occasion two soldiers went out from a fort at Louisville to gather pumpkins. These were put in a sack which one man shouldered as both started in Indian file for home. An Indian who had been in hiding now came slipping up in the rear; fearing lest the discharge of his "trusty rifle" would alarm the country the redskin laid the weapon down and closed in on the burdened soldier with the tomahawk poised overhead. In the nick of time the white man felt his danger and with a superhuman effort threw his bag of pumpkins solidly into the Indian's face, almost breaking his neck. He then took to his heels and, escaping the Indian's confederates, the two safely regained the fort—to tell the rest of their lives the story of "The Battle of the Pumpkins." Another pompous name for a ludicrous encounter was "The Battle of the Boards." In this instance a party of Kentucky rangers spent a night in a deserted cabin in the woods, mounting into the loft; during the night a band of Indians came to the same retreat but remained below. While the whites watched them prepare for the night the rafters gave way, and the Indians, overwhelmed by a shower of timbers and white men, decamped with frightful yells.

Captain James Ward and nephew were descending the Ohio "under circumstances," writes Collins, the Kentucky historian, "which rendered a rencounter with the Indians peculiarly to be dreaded." With a crew of half a dozen men they had "embarked in a crazy boat, about forty-five feet long and eight feet wide, with no other bulwark than a single pine plank,



A View on Cheat River.



above each gunnel." The usual period of watchfulness being succeeded by the inevitable period of carelessness, several hundred Indians were suddenly found off the bows, who at once opened fire. Ward, knowing that, as was ever true, the only hope of escape was by keeping in the river's current, bent to the oars; but his nephew started for his rifle at the sight of the savages, and dropped dead with a ball in his breast. The oar that the dead man had abandoned fell into the river, seriously handicapping the efforts of Ward, for the boat, in answer to his exertions, tended only to swing in a circle. To his intense disgust the "crew" suddenly failed him utterly; a captain who had been telling stories of his daring in the Revolutionary War was lying on his back in the bottom of the boat murmuring "O Lord! O Lord!" A Dutchman who tipped the scale at something over three hundred pounds was putting in his time endeavoring to get as much of his anatomy as possible behind the low gunwales and studying what portion of himself it were better to leave exposed in case he could not perfectly succeed in hiding; when the rattle of the bullets came Collins affirms that he lost patience, and, raising his head, "in a tone of querulous remonstrance, called out, 'Oh, now! quit tat tamned nonsense, tere, will you!'" No shots were fired from the boat until the middle of the current was reached; then Captain Ward attempted to get a shot, but the stampeding horses rocked the frail craft too violently and the gun was discarded for the oar; for an hour the Indians followed on shore but with the width of the river once between them the chase was at last given over.

As a type of many struggles between pioneers

whose boats were either fastened or grounded on the river shore, the bitter fight between Indians and a flatboat in charge of Henry Crist and Solomon Spears in Salt River in 1788 should also be cited. The party of whites numbered thirteen, including one woman. They left Louisville with their boat full of salt kettles and floated down the Ohio, which was high and ascended Salt River on the backwater to "Mud Garrison," a sort of fortification near the famous salt licks to which the whites resorted in case the Indians attacked them while at work making salt. Sending scouts ashore when Salt River was reached the boat moved slowly up-stream. The first day passed without incident; about eight o'clock in the morning of the following day the boat was headed for the shore where breakfast was to be cooked, at a point eight miles below the mouth of Rolling Fork. As the boat grated on the shore the gobbling of turkeys was heard in the woods and two of the crew leaped ashore with their guns, though the scouts had seen "signs" of Indians and though the mimicking of the call of a turkey was the common decoy known to the redskins and in which they were trained from childhood to become proficient.

Hardly were the hunters on shore than a force of a hundred and twenty Indians leaped forward to secure them, their comrades, and the boat's cargo. At first they attempted an assault in force on the boat, which, though fastened to a tree, yet lay afloat in deep water. The crew, hastening to their guns, repulsed the assault with frightful effect; the Indians then retired to the trees on the bank and the fight settled down into a dogged, prolonged struggle for the mastery.

The boat had a log chain for cable [reads the account left by Crist himself] and when she was first brought ashore, the chain was thrown around a small tree that stood in the water's edge, and the hook run through one of the links. . . . The kettles in the boat had been ranked up along the sides, leaving an open gangway through the middle of the boat from bow to stern. Unfortunately, the bow lay to shore, so that the guns of the Indians raked the whole length of the gangway, and their fire was constant and destructive. Spears and several others of the bravest men had already fallen, some killed and others mortally wounded. From the commencement of the battle, many efforts had been made to disengage the boat from the shore, all of which had failed. The hope was that, if they could once loose the cable, the boat would drift out of the reach of the enemy's guns; but any attempt to do this by land would expose the person to certain destruction. Fossett's [one of the hunters, who was wounded on shore] right arm was broken, and he could no longer handle his rifle. He got a pole and placing himself low down in the bow of the boat, commenced punching at the hook in the chain, but the point of the hook was turned from him, and all his efforts seemed only to drive it further into the link. He at length discovered where a small limb had been cut from the pole, and left a knot about an inch long; this knot, after a number of efforts, he placed against the point of the hook, and, jerking the pole suddenly towards him, threw the hook out of the link. The chain fell, and the boat drifted slowly out from the bank; and by means of an oar worked over head, the boat was brought into the middle of the river, with her side to the shore, which protected them from the fire of the Indians. The battle had now lasted upwards of an hour. . . . The survivors had now time to look round upon the havoc that had been made of their little band. Five of their companions lay dead in the gangway—Spears, Floyd, Fossett and Boyce were wounded—Crepps, Crist and Moore remained unhurt. It was evident that Spears' wound was mortal. . . . He urged the survivors to run the boat to the opposite side of the river, and save themselves by immediate flight, and leave him to his fate.

But the boat slowly neared the southern shore, making escape now hopeless. The Indians gained the south side and, yelling like bloodhounds, ran down towards the boat, which they now looked upon as their certain prey. Crepps and Crist each seized a rifle, and ascended the river bank. The Indians fell back into a ravine and only fired a volley at them as they fled. Crepps received a ball in his left side and a bullet struck Crist's heel, crushing the bones of his foot; Moore escaped unhurt, bringing in the tidings of the defeat. The country was at once roused. Crepps was found and brought in but died about the time he reached home. Crist, unable to walk, crawled into a thicket, but knowing only death would be his fate there, bound his moccasins to his knees, and, at the rate of half a mile an hour, started on hands and knees for Bullitt's Lick eight miles away. Since the 25th (it was now the 27th) he had not tasted food. On the night of the 28th he lay near a trail and called out to a passing horseman, who, filled with fear, galloped away to the settlement with the news of the voice in the woods. A relief party found the exhausted man before dawn. The woman of the party was carried to Canada and ransomed by a trader. Crist was later a member of the State Legislature and a member of Congress in 1808.

This struggle, occurring on a lesser tributary of the Ohio, brings out, by contrast, one of the important phases of the struggles upon that river; here on Salt River it was little advantage (though the only hope of escape) to get the boat unfastened and adrift, for the river was so narrow that the boat could be covered by Indian rifles at all times from the shores; narrow



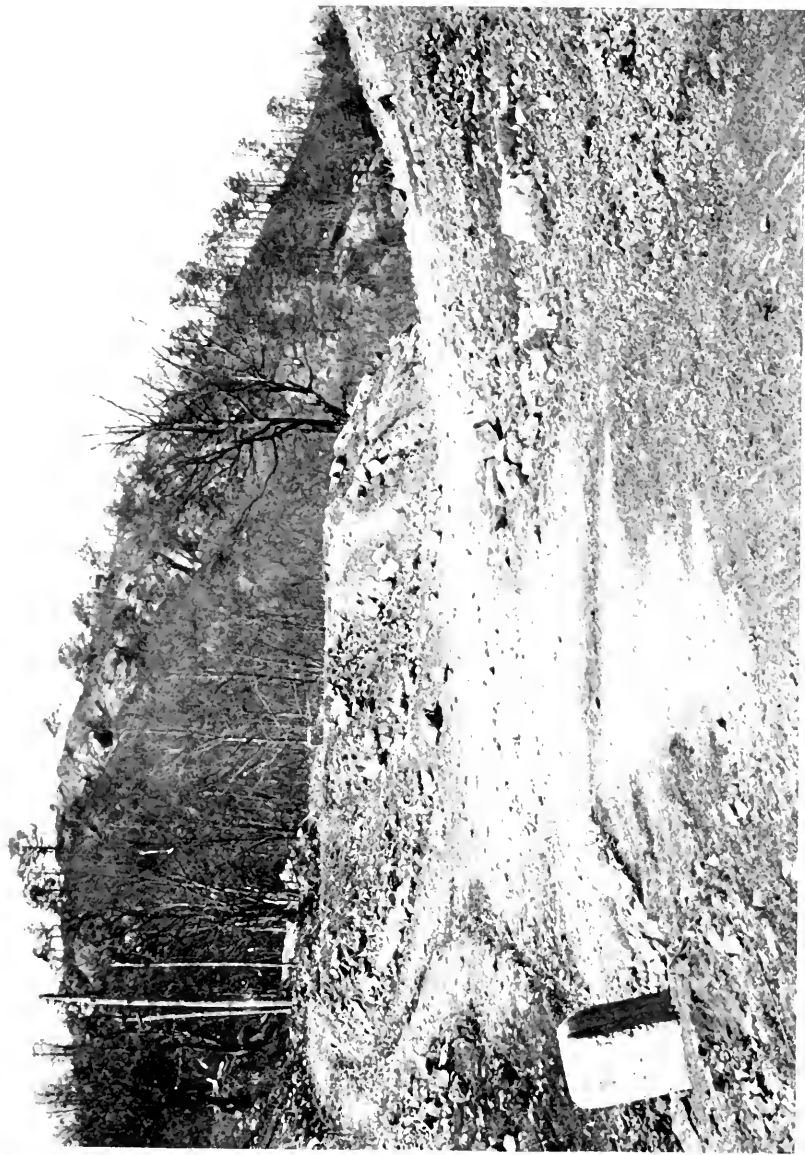
ivers, too, could be easily swam or forded, as was true here. On the wide Ohio, however, a party of Indians without any craft could be easily avoided if the pioneer's boat was kept in the current of the river; and the river could not be forded save under exceptional circumstances at a few points.

The hundred chronicled and thousand unchronicled tragedies of the Ohio River during this period are the more revolting because in so many instances they involved entire families, the women and children as well as the men. As the preceding pages show, many pioneer women, home-seeking on the Ohio with brothers, fathers, or husbands, had an opportunity to show a meed of bravery worthy of an Elizabeth Zane or Mary Ingles. The mother of one John Rowan of Kentucky was one of these brave women fitted for the task of conquering a wilderness and then making it blossom as the rose. The story of her quiet, steady daring on an Ohio flatboat, as told by her son, will be much in place in this record of inhuman war. Incidentally it illustrates the power of a perfect silence on savages who were as superstitious as they were bloodthirsty; as such, it is unique in the river's war-time annals.

In the latter part of April, 1784, my father with his family, and five other families, set out from Louisville, in two flat-bottomed boats, for the Long Falls of Green River. . . . The families were in one boat and their cattle in another. When we had descended the river Ohio about one hundred miles, and were near the middle of it, gliding along very securely, as we thought, about ten o'clock of the night, we heard a prodigious yelling, by Indians, some two or three miles below us, on the northern shore. We had floated but a little distance farther

down the river, when we saw a number of fires on that shore. The yelling still continued, and we concluded they had captured a boat which had passed us about midday, and were massacring their captives. Our two boats were lashed together, and the best practical arrangements made for defending them. The men were distributed by my father to the best advantage in case of an attack; they were seven in number including himself. The boats were neared to the Kentucky shore, with as little noise from the oars as possible. We were afraid to approach too near the Kentucky shore, lest there might be Indians on that shore also. We had not yet reached their uppermost fire (their fires were extended along the bank at intervals for half a mile or more), and we entertained a faint hope that we might slip by unperceived. But they discovered us when we had got about midway of their fires, and commanded us to come to. We were silent, for my father had given strict orders that no one should utter any sound but that of his rifle; and not that until the Indians should come within powder-burning distance. They united in a most terrific yell, and rushed to their canoes and pursued us. We floated on in silence—not an oar was pulled. They approached us within less than a hundred yards, with a seeming determination to board us.

Just at this moment my mother rose from her seat, collected the axes, and placed one by the side of each man, where he stood with his gun, touching him on the knee with the handle of the ax, as she leaned it up by him against the side of the boat, to let him know it was there, and retired to her seat, retaining a hatchet for herself. The Indians continued hovering on our rear, and yelling for near three miles, when, awed by the inferences which they drew from our silence, they relinquished further pursuit. None but those who have had a practical acquaintance with Indian warfare, can form a just idea of the terror which this hideous yelling is calculated to inspire. I was then about ten years old, and shall never forget the sensations of that night; nor can I ever cease to admire the fortitude and composure displayed by my mother on that trying occasion. We were saved, I have no doubt, by the judicious system of conduct and defence, which my father had prescribed



Cumberland Gap, Looking Northwest toward Kentucky.  
From a photograph by John Buchanan.



to our little band. We were seven men and three boys—but nine guns in all. They were more than a hundred. My mother, in speaking of it afterwards, in her calm way, said we had made a *providential escape*, for which we ought to feel grateful.

Such were the conquerors of the Ohio Valley; for though at the start the pioneers of the lower Ohio Basin (Kentucky) came very largely through the back door, Cumberland Gap, the vast majority of the entire population of the valley at the end of the eighteenth century came down the Ohio River.<sup>1</sup>

The chief highway was the Ohio River [writes Mr. Roosevelt in his graphic volumes, *The Winning of the West*]; all kinds of craft were used, even bark canoes and pirogues, or dugouts; but the keel-boat, and especially the flat-bottomed scow with square ends, were the ordinary means of conveyance. They were of all sizes. The passengers and their live stock were of course huddled together so as to take up as little room as possible. Sometimes the emigrants built or bought their own boat, navigated it themselves, and sold it or broke it up on reaching their destination. At other times they merely hired a passage. A few of the more enterprising boat owners speedily introduced a regular emigrant service, making trips at stated times from Pittsburg or perhaps Limestone, and advertising the carriage capacity of their boats and the times of starting. The trip from Pittsburg to Louisville took a week or ten days; but in

<sup>1</sup> The distinction made here is important and interesting. Long, black, and desperate as was the route to Kentucky by the "Wilderness Road" the majority of pioneers previous to, say, 1785 came that way. This is a telling comment on the difficult and dangerous character of the Ohio River route. "During about half a century," writes James Lane Allen, "this depression [Cumberland Gap] was the difficult, exhausting entrance-point through which the State received the largest part of its people, the furniture of their homes, and the implements of their civilization. . . ."—*The Blue Grass Region of Kentucky*, 252. Perhaps Mr. Allen overstates the length of time during which the Wilderness Road was the great route to Kentucky, as almost every other writer has misrepresented the date of the rise of the Ohio River to importance as a pioneer route.

low water it might last a month. The number of boats passing down the Ohio, laden with would-be settlers and their belongings, speedily became very great. An eye witness stated that between November 13th and December 22d, of 1785, thirty-nine boats, with an average of ten souls in each, went down the Ohio to the Falls; and there were others which stopped at some of the settlements farther up the river. As time went on the number of emigrants who adopted this method of travel increased; larger boats were used, and the emigrants took more property with them. In the last half of the year 1787 there passed by Fort Harmer [opposite Marietta, which was founded in the next year] 146 boats, with 3196 souls, 1371 horses, 165 wagons, 191 cattle, 245 sheep, and 24 hogs. In the year ending in November, 1788, 967 boats, carrying 18,370 souls, with 7986 horses, 2372 cows, 1110 sheep, and 646 wagons, went down the Ohio. The inrush being so great, Kentucky grew apace. In 1785 the population was estimated at from twenty to thirty thousand; and the leading towns, Louisville, Lexington, Harrodsburg, Boonesboro, St. Asaph's, were thriving little hamlets, with stores and horse grist-mills, and no longer mere clusters of stockaded cabins. . . . The population of Louisville amounted to about 300 souls, of whom 116 were fighting men; between it and Lexington the whole country was well settled; but fear of the Indians kept settlers back from the Ohio.

The fighting pioneers settled almost every available "bottom" on the southern or Virginia side of the river, though for some years there was a long stretch between what was loosely known as the "Monongahela country" and "Kentucky" that contained no settlements of any size; and Indian hostilities warned pioneers, as noted, from the immediate shore of the Ohio in Kentucky. The descending flatboats discharged their passengers and freight at such entrepôts as Limestone (Maysville), which was settled in 1784 by Virginians, and Louisville, from which points well-worn routes led inward toward the "settlements." Many of the

rivers were also used to reach the same destination.

As late as 1796 the southern bank of the Ohio between Wheeling and Limestone was a "wilderness." A pioneer of that day writes of it as follows:

We found the country settled the whole of the way from Morgantown to Wheeling, and a verry pleasant road. . . . From Wheeling to Bellville [West Virginia, on the Ohio] it is a wilderness for most of the way except the banks of the river this [Virginia] side—which is one hundred miles we found it verry difficult to get victules to eat. I drove [cattle] fifty mile with one meal of victules through the wilderness & only a foot path & that was so blind that we was pestered to keep it we could drive but a little ways in a day. . . . We found some inhabitance along the river but they came on last spring and had no provisions only what they brought with them. The country is as good as it was represented to be & is seteling verry fast. . . . if you would give me all your intrest to go back there [Connecticut] to live again it would be no temptation. . . . it is incredible to tell the number of boats that goes down this river with familys a man that lives at Redstone Old fort [Brownsville, Pennsylvania] . . . says that he saw last spring seventy Boats go past in one day with familys moveing down the Ohio. . . . There is now at this place eighty inhabitance. Corn is going at 2<sup>s</sup> pr bushel by the quantity 2<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> by the single bushel. There has been between two and three thousand bushels raised in Bellville this season & all the settlements along the river [h]as raised corn in proportion but the vast number of people that are moveing into this country & depending upon buying makes it scerce & much higher than it would be. There is three double the people that passes by here then there is by your house there is Packets that passes from Pittsburg to Kentucky one from Pittsburg to Wheeling 90 miles one from that to Muskingdom [Marietta] 90 miles One from that to Gallipolees 90 miles the french settlement opisite the big Canawa [Kanawha] & from there there is another to Kentucky—of which goes and returns every week &—loaded with passengers & they carry the male Mammy offered me some cloath for a Jacket & if you would

sent it . . . it would be very exceptible for cloaths is verry high here Common flannel is 6s per yard & tow cloth is 3s 9d the woolves are so thick that sheep cannot be kept without a shephard they often catch our calvs they have got one of mine & one of [a neighbor] the latter they caught in the field near the houses I have often been awoak out of my sleep by the howling of the wolves. This is a fine place for Eunice they ask 1s per yard for weaving tow cloth. . . . Horses are very high in this country & if you have not sold mine I should be [glad] if you would try to send him on. . . . Land is rising verry fast Mr. Avory is selling his lots at 36 dollars apeace he has sold three since he came here at that price. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Slowly but surely even this unoccupied stretch of river became dotted with cabins and clusters of cabins; our map showing the more important towns on the southern shore affords a bird's-eye view of the unfolding of the dark wilderness through which Mary Ingles plodded half a century before. Yet the interesting fact must be kept in mind that the interior, averaging from twenty to an hundred miles back from the river, was settled earlier and was more thickly populated than any portion of the bloody border-line—the river itself. Of the settlements on the Ohio in Kentucky that have become thriving towns few date back prior to 1800 except Louisville, Maysville, and Covington (first surveyed in 1779); Henderson was laid out in 1810, Owensboro in 1817, Greenup in 1818, and Paducah in 1827. Smithland, Vanceburg, and Catlettsburg were of the next generation, though at these and other points pioneer clearings and cabins were in evidence at a far earlier time. In 1800 Fort Massac (Metropolis, Illinois) “was the only white settlement between the mouth of the Wabash and the Mississippi,”

<sup>1</sup> A. B. Hulbert, *Historic Highways of America*, xii., 72-77.



says Collins; "a few families resided near the fort and were dependent on it, and two companies of the U. S. army were stationed there."

But this is touching the other side of the river—the northern or "Indian" side, which must be treated in another chapter.

■

## Chapter VIII

### Fort Washington and "The Bloody Way"

NOTHING could be more singular in the history of an American river than that its two shores should be settled neither at the same time nor by the same stock of people. While this is true of the Ohio it must not, of course, be interpreted too literally, for in blood New Englanders and Virginians were of the same race, and there was not a very great space of intervening time between the filling of the southern and the northern river banks. Howbeit, in temperament and training the people who founded the Ohio Valley settlements in Virginia and Kentucky were far removed from those who laid the beginnings in the same valley in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. And, again, while the southern shores were being settled from 1770 onward, not a single lasting legal settlement was made on the northern shore until 1788; at this time the country south of the river contained over one hundred and seventy thousand souls.

The reason for this singular one-sided development is fully explained by the fact that the expansion of Virginia westward had extended to the Ohio River while to the northward New York and Pennsylvania had not expanded beyond their chartered limits. The Ohio

River had been made the boundary line between the white and red races in 1768 at the treaty of Fort Stanwix and it remained the nominal boundary until the Federal Government was established; that government finally began purchasing portions of the "Indian side"; first the old stamping grounds of the Delawares were bought; and, one by one, the purchases embraced the entire "Old Northwest," which was created before it was legally secured. The United States proceeded on the theory that the land beyond the Ohio rightfully belonged to the Indians; and it was acquired practically by condemnation suits piecemeal.

Throughout that decade and a half, from 1770 to 1785, when the fighting Virginians were striking their savage blows for the river's conquest and making their few hardy settlements on the southern side, there were no settlements on the "Indian side." Fort Laurens had been built far back on the Muskingum but was quickly abandoned; Fort McIntosh was built at the mouth of the Beaver in Pennsylvania, but throughout the Revolution no other forts were erected on the northern shore.

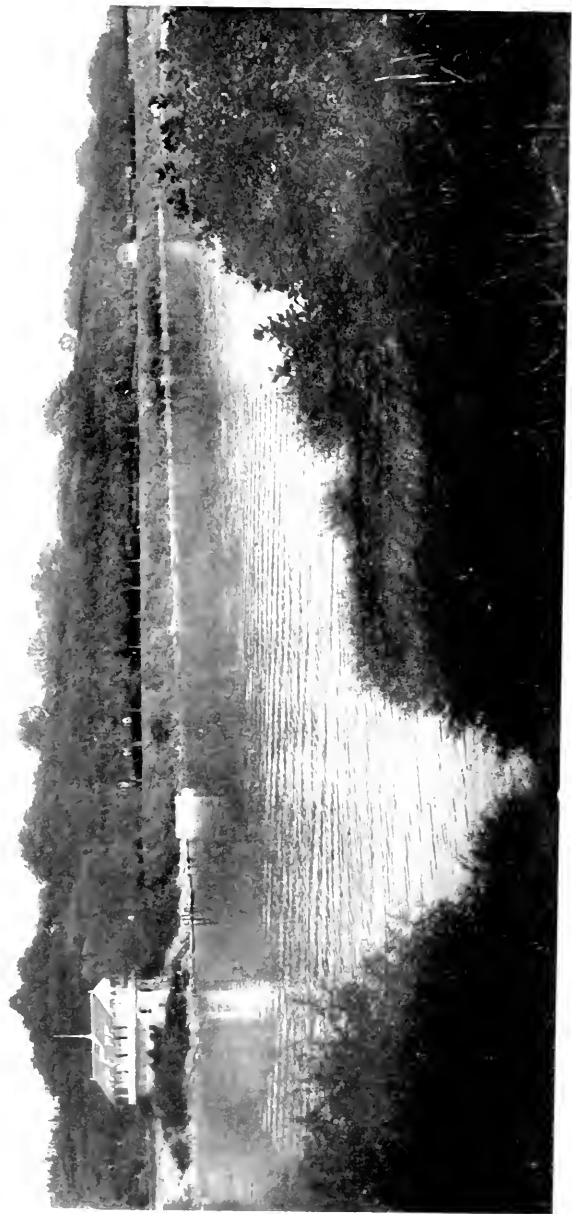
Yet it must not be supposed that of all the thousands who went home-seeking down the river after the close of the war none stopped on the "Indian side." When the Revolutionary War was won all the territory between the Alleghenies and Mississippi came into the possession of the United States. It was natural enough that the oncoming swarm of settlers should feel like ignoring the Indian's technical claim to ownership and should land their boats and clear their "claims" on the fertile bottoms of what is now Ohio and Indiana.

They did this. It was not an unknown land to

many of them who crossed the Ohio from the Virginia side, for instance. Time on time had they flung themselves across the river upon fleeing parties of redskin raiders; hundreds of them had ranged the forests under vigilant militia officers watching for the safety of the forts and settlements on the Virginia side. Thus all the streams flowing into the Ohio from what is now southeastern Ohio were well known to the Long Knives before the first squatters located on the "Indian side." Having driven the Indian away it is not strange that these conquerors felt little temerity in building cabins on the northern Ohio shore. Of course, sooner or later, they heard that their settlements were illegal, because the land had not been purchased from the Indians. But they did not mind the rumors, and argued, in their rough way, that if the land did not belong to those who had conquered it surely a new law of ownership had been created among men. Since the dawn of history the right of conquest had been acknowledged in every land.

And so, beginning about 1780 perhaps, a fringe of camps and cabins sprang up on the bottom-lands on the "Indian side" of the Ohio. These were the first American pioneers to live on Ohio soil. They were the vanguard of the Virginians who had won the Old Southwest—creeping indomitably into the Old Northwest. It is difficult to count accurately these intruders but we do know that by 1784-85, when the United States authorities attempted to stop this movement, the number of illegal settlements was large.

In 1785 the United States concluded a treaty with the Wyandot, Delaware, Chippewa, and Ottawa



Muskingum Park, Marietta, Ohio, where General St. Clair was Inaugurated Governor of the Northwest Territory, 1788.

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Indians who dwelt between the Ohio River and Lake Erie, at Fort McIntosh. This treaty was conducted by George Rogers Clark, Richard Butler, and Arthur Lee. It created a new American boundary line indicated by the Cuyahoga and Muskingum rivers as far south as the old site of Fort Laurens; thence a straight line running west to the portage of the Great Miami and thence to the portage of the Maumee or "Miami of the Lakes." This treaty, signed January 21, 1785, was the first which gave the United States title to any land northwest of the Ohio River. The purpose of the government was to survey this area and sell the land in order to pay the Revolutionary war debt.

It was the commissioners referred to who first called attention to the settlements already made on the "Indian side" of the river, and on January 24th instructed Colonel Harmar, commanding at Fort Pitt, that "surveying or settling the lands not within the limits of any particular State being forbid by the United States, in Congress assembled, the commander will employ such force as he may judge necessary in driving off persons attempting to settle on the lands of the United States."

It was then that Harmar found how many people had crowded across the Ohio. On March 31st, he detailed Ensign Armstrong with twenty soldiers to proceed down the river to drive these intruders back. Armstrong crossed the Little Beaver April 1st, and dispossessed one family there; he found others at Yellow Creek, Mingo Bottom, Norris's Town, Haglin's or Mercer's Town, and opposite Wheeling. Armstrong's report to Harmar was discouraging. He said the

pioneers "are moving to the unsettled countries by forties and fifties." It was estimated that there were upwards of three hundred families on the Muskingum River farther down, as many more on the Hockhocking, and "more than fifteen hundred on the rivers Miami and Scioto." From Wheeling to the Scioto, Armstrong reported "there is scarcely one bottom on the river but has one or more families living thereon."

Armstrong's report is the more interesting because this was not the first attempt to keep the irresistible pioneer advance from leaping the "River of Many White Caps." As early as 1779 Colonel Brodhead had sent Captain Clark to Wheeling with sixty men to uproot settlements in Ohio opposite that place. Armstrong's report shows that, in the six years following Brodhead's efforts, a large population had defied the military order as now they were to defy the civil order. And not only had they come, but in their rough-and-ready way these first Ohioans had sought to establish civil government among themselves. At Mercertown, the present Martin's Ferry, Ohio, two justices of the peace had been elected, and cases had been tried by them. There is evidence that this settlement was never completely broken up<sup>1</sup>; if this is the truth it is the oldest settlement of American pioneers (other than military and mission promoters) in the State of Ohio. But, furthermore, this enterprising vanguard had actually taken steps to form a State. A call for delegates was issued March 12, 1785; they were invited to meet at four points, namely, on the Miami, Scioto, and Muskingum rivers and at the house of one Jonas

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Hanna, *Historical Collections of Harrison County, Ohio*, 51.



Menzons, for the purpose of electing delegates to a State convention to be held at the mouth of the Scioto River, March 20th.<sup>1</sup> The call was signed by John Emerson. It denied the right of Congress to reserve land northwest of the Ohio River and sell the same to liquidate the public debt.

Legally Emerson and his crew were in the wrong; but as the expression of American spirit they were tremendously in the right. Had not Congress settled quickly, and with marvellous wisdom, the perplexing question answered by the Ordinance of 1787, it is to be doubted if a State would not have been founded northwest of the Ohio nearly as soon as the State of Kentucky was ordained to the south—1792.

This slight survey of the first attempts at home-building on the "Indian side" of the Ohio emphasizes the fact that the Virginians and Scotch-Irish of the "Monongahela country" were ready, at the close of the Revolution, to leap over the river and conquer the forest-wilderness of Ohio as they had, in days gone by, conquered its red-skinned inhabitants and driven them away. But Congress had received from the various States that claimed the Northwest, cessions which made it master of almost this entire region; the only reservations were those by which Virginia retained a large tract in the Scioto Valley, and by which Connecticut retained what is known as the Western Reserve. Congress immediately authorized the survey of that portion of the "Indian side" contained within the limits purchased at the treaty of Fort McIntosh in 1785; and Fort Harmar was erected in that year

<sup>1</sup> *St. Clair Papers*, ii., 5, note.

on the Ohio at the mouth of the Muskingum River, where troops might be stationed to protect the surveyors of the Seven Ranges (as the survey was titled), and more effectually to keep the Virginians and Pennsylvanians from continuing to cross the Ohio.

In 1787 the famous Ordinance was passed by Congress creating the "Territory Northwest of the River Ohio." This Ordinance was made possible by the formation of the Ohio Company of Associates, a company of Revolutionary officers under the leadership of General Rufus Putnam, the fortifier of West Point, who first gained fame for the defences he constructed about Boston at the outbreak of the war. On June 16, 1783, two hundred and eighty-five officers of the Continental line petitioned Congress for a grant of land west of Pennsylvania between Lake Erie and the Ohio River. "This petition," wrote Dr. Hinsdale, "was really the foundation of the Ohio Company of Associates, organized at the 'Bunch of Grapes' in Boston, March 3, 1786." In a marvellous way the Ohio Company was dependent on the passage by Congress of the famed Ordinance; "for," Dr. Hinsdale well asks, "what would homes be worth to New England men without good government?" The Ohio Company held in its hands millions of dollars-worth then only twelve cents on the dollar! What an opportunity this was for a grateful government to redeem its worthless currency in good lands!

And yet Congress could not erect the magnificent Territory beyond the Ohio without assurance that it would be quickly peopled by a sturdy race of men who would shortly be able to defend themselves and grow strong. Thus it was that the Ohio Company



Rufus Putnam.  
Redrawn from an old print.

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and the Ordinance of 1787 were dependent, and on July 27th, Dr. Manasseh Cutler, agent of the Ohio Company, succeeded in securing from Congress an agreement by which five million acres lying immediately west of the Seven Ranges was authorized to be sold. Of this one and a half millions went to the Ohio Company and three and one half to what was known as the Scioto Company headed by Colonel William Duer. "The ease with which the Ohio Company carried its proposition through Congress," wrote Dr. Hinsdale, "has been the subject of surprise for a hundred years. No doubt the explanation consists largely in the fact that the new colony was proposed by a body of men fully able to make it successful."

Thus, very briefly, the strange providence was realized which made a portion of the 'Indian side' of the Ohio River the field of exploration for New Englanders. Look at it from any standpoint and the fact must be considered a miracle—a miracle of incongruity and of hope. For with every other national strain converging on the great river valley—cavalier Virginians, Scotch-Irish Pennsylvanians, Moravians, Quakers, and Dutch—does it not seem strange that New England should now opportunely reach out her hand to have a voice in the civilization of this valley?

The New Englanders at once began preparations to emigrate to the shores of the "River of Many White Caps." The vanguard of about fifty officers and workmen left for the West in the winter of 1787-88, and after a tedious journey over Forbes's Road through Pennsylvania reached the Youghiogheny River in the early spring. Here at what is now West Newton, Pa., boats were constructed for the river trip, the flagship of the

tiny squadron being the *Adventure Galley*, afterwards called the *Mayflower* in memory of the historic ship of the Pilgrim fathers. Descending the Youghiogheny, Monongahela, and Ohio the veteran hero General Putnam landed at Fort Harmar at the mouth of the Muskingum April 7, 1788. On the opposite shore of the Muskingum the pioneer town in the Northwest Territory was founded by these forty-eight founders of Ohio. Fort Harmar, erected partly to prevent the Virginian and Pennsylvanian squatters from crossing the Ohio, received with equanimity the legal purchasers of the Ohio Company's domain. At once a blockhouse was erected by the New Englanders and named the "Campus Martius"; about it the little town began to grow up. In the fall preceding, Congress had elected General Arthur St. Clair governor of the territory northwest of the river Ohio. In July, 1788, he arrived, and on the fifteenth of that month the inauguration ceremony was duly celebrated. The veterans of the Revolution on the Ohio gave the name of Marietta to their new town in honor of Marie Antoinette and France. Generals St. Clair of Pennsylvania, and Putnam of Massachusetts, Samuel Holden Parsons of Connecticut, and James M. Varnum of Rhode Island were the leaders in the work of establishing the settlement, aided by Winthrop Sargent, secretary of the Territory, and by the noble Manasseh Cutler, who was a frequent visitor and a powerful advocate in the East. Parsons, Varnum, and John Cleve Symmes, Chief Justice of New Jersey, were elected Judges of the Territory.

But the name of Judge Symmes must at once call our attention away from Marietta and the Musk-

ingum to the Miami River, two hundred miles farther down the Ohio. Almost simultaneous with the Ohio Company's purchase Judge Symmes of New Jersey applied to Congress for a similar grant in the Northwest Territory; accordingly in the same year, 1787, Congress sold to him what is known as the Miami or Symmes Tract of one million acres lying between the Great and Little Miami rivers. In the same year that Marietta was founded three settlements were made on the Ohio River on the Miami Tract, known as Columbia, Losantiville, and Great Bend. The second of these, opposite the mouth of Licking River (*L* standing for Licking, *os* meaning mouth, and *anti* meaning opposite), at once began to show signs of rapid advancement, and was soon made the territorial capital; thither Governor St. Clair moved, and here the territorial judges held court. The name Losantiville seems to have required too much explanation and was perhaps incomprehensible to those unacquainted with the mysteries of the Latin language; the name of the settlement was therefore changed by Governor St. Clair to Cincinnati, a name borrowed from the famous society of Revolutionary officers; it had withal the classic ring and significance and at the same time was more easily explained to the curious.

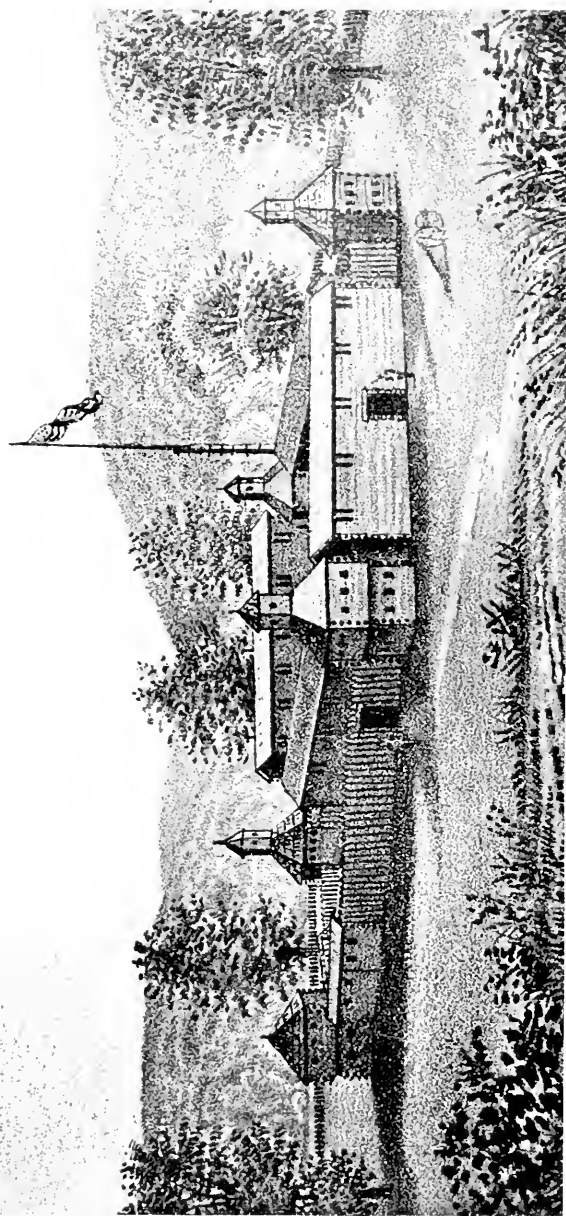
As we have seen in former chapters the Indians of the Old Northwest had been held in check by the campaigns of General Andrew Lewis and General George Rogers Clark; a number of expeditions from Pittsburg had, by the close of the Revolutionary War, practically freed the Muskingum River, and the repeated expeditions from Kentucky northward had driven all of the Ohio Indians to the head-waters of

the Scioto, Miami, and Wabash rivers. During the six years succeeding the close of the Revolution the tribes built their towns in the swampy forests and sunny uplands of northwestern Ohio; and though no definite outbreak occurred, hundreds of ungovernable braves kept the old war-paths leading to Pennsylvania and Kentucky worn deep into the ground. Great Britain, remembering the letter but ignoring the spirit of the Treaty of Paris, held to her forts, principally Detroit and Niagara on the Lakes; and, while the whole miserable story has never been made clear, there is no question that her agents were responsible in a large measure for the Indian war which now broke out, threatening the existence of the frail settlements made on the "Indian side" of the Ohio.

The marauds of the Shawanese and Miami Indians from their rendezvous at the head of the Miami and the Maumee rivers were felt severely in Kentucky at the very time that Cincinnati was being founded; and it seems as though the new settlements had opened the eyes of the Indian chieftains to the fact that the "River of Many White Caps" could never again be a boundary line. In 1789 General St. Clair invited all northwestern Indians to come and treat with him at Fort Harmar, where the Wyandots, Delawares, and other tribes made a treaty practically confirming the Fort McIntosh treaty of three years previous which gave the southeastern half of Ohio to the United States.

But as a body the congregating hordes that had drifted under British influence near the western extremity of Lake Erie were pleased to ignore and then repudiate pacts made with the United States, and practically issued an ultimatum that the Ohio River,





Fort Washington, afterwards Cincinnati.  
From an old print.

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which was made a boundary between the red and white races by the treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 and reaffirmed at Camp Charlotte in 1774, should now and forever be the boundary line; it soon became evident there was to come a tremendous final struggle between the young republic and the aborigines, who were goaded by British agents to hold that republic to the narrowest possible limit—"the Monongahela country." The few settlements on the northern shores of the Ohio were pitifully weak and the bitter cry, "White man shall not plant corn north of the Ohio," heralded a final decision and a desperate conflict.

In the fall of 1789 President Washington wrote to Governor St. Clair at Marietta asking bluntly whether or not "the Wabash and her Indians are most inclined for war or peace"; the Governor's scout, Gamelin, returned from the Wabash in April of the following year saying that most of the northwestern Indians had "bad hearts," and that McKee and Simeon Girty were in full control of the gathering legions; Major Hamtramck sent word from Vincennes in the next month saying, "your Excellency can have no great hopes of bringing the Indians to a peace with the United States." The feeling in Kentucky at this time could not have been more plainly expressed than in these words of Judge Innes to the Secretary of War:

I will, sir, be candid on this subject . . . the people say they have long groaned under their misfortunes, they see no prospect of relief . . . they begin to want faith in the Government, and appear determined to revenge themselves: For this purpose a meeting was lately held in this place, by a number of respectable characters, to determine on the propriety of carrying on three expeditions this fall.

Accordingly the President called on Kentucky for a thousand militiamen and on Pennsylvania for five hundred for the conquest of northwestern Ohio; the troops were ordered to rendezvous at Fort Washington.

It is not our purpose here to give an extended account of the four years' war that was now conducted with Fort Washington as the base of supplies. It is very interesting indeed to compare the three campaigns of this war for the final possession of the Ohio Valley with the three campaigns of the Old French War by which England won the Ohio Valley from France. In each instance the first two campaigns were failures; in each instance the last campaigns, more carefully planned, more deliberately conducted, were complete successes. General Josiah Harmar marched north from Fort Washington in October, 1790, with his fifteen hundred men, knowing but little more, if any, concerning his destination than did the young Colonel Washington when he crept away from Will's Creek for the Ohio in 1754. Two weeks later, after two days of ill-concerted fighting with a small Indian army on the present site of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Harmar began his retreat to the Ohio, having lost three hundred and ten out of five hundred men; the Indian loss was less than a score; the effect of the expedition on the situation was much like the effect of Washington's capitulation at Fort Necessity in 1754, in that it gave the British-incited Indians a vain but alluring hope of success. On the other hand some Indian captives were taken and fields of maize were destroyed, and, what was of far more value, some knowledge was secured of that strategic region in

which the scattered remnants of a score of Indian nations were now converging for a last struggle with their white foe.

The second campaign in the war was given by Washington into the hands of Governor Arthur St. Clair, and on March 3, 1791, Congress authorized the organization of the second regiment of infantry and gave to Washington the power to enlist two thousand men for six months; thus St. Clair, after garrisoning Venango and Forts Harmar, Washington, Knox, and Steuben (built on the present site of Steubenville, O. in 1789) was to march upon the Miami country.

The commander, Governor St. Clair, whose record in both the Old French and Revolutionary wars had been a noble one, was to prove to be, indeed, the Braddock of the West. In ever so many ways the campaign of which he was now the moving power may be compared to the second campaign of the Old French War which ended so disastrously on the mouldering banks of the Monongahela. For instance, recruits came very slowly, though St. Clair's right-hand officer, General Richard Butler, labored in person in the effort to attend to this department. In this case too there was little, if any, more popular interest in conquering the northwestern savages than there was back in '55 when the people of the colonies were asked to take up arms and drive the French from the Ohio Valley. The campaign was actively begun in the spring of 1791, and its general object was to establish a line of forts from Fort Washington on the Ohio River straight north to what is now Fort Wayne, Indiana, where a strong fortification was to be built "for the purpose of awing and curbing the Indians in

that quarter and as the only preventive of further hostilities." The one end sought by the government was peace, and only peace. "This is of more value," were the words of the Secretary of War to General St. Clair, "than millions of uncultivated acres." Thus it may be seen that the war was not one of conquest but merely a war of self-defence brought upon the Indians by the actions of their own irresponsible young men, and can in no wise be classed as a feature of "a century of dishonor"; indeed the government went so far in its attempt to awe the Indians into peaceful measures as to send two preliminary raiding parties northward from Kentucky in the hope that the Indians would realize its serious intentions; but these expeditions failed as would most of their kind; the squaws "looked behind them and turned pale," but the warriors only revelled and sung around the fires of their boasted prowess.

St. Clair planned to march from the Ohio on July 10th, but a combination of delays, miscalculations, and peculations held him back week after week, and on September 1st the Secretary of War sent a stinging reprimand to General Butler and Quartermaster-General Hodgdon, who were still at Pittsburg, and ordered them to set sail at once for Fort Washington with such men and stores as were on hand, and join St. Clair. Slowly the companies that were to form his army were reaching Fort Washington and reporting to the commanding general, who had been on the ground since the 15th of May; for four months St. Clair worked like a galley slave in the difficult hope of creating something out of nothing—an army out of crowds of hungry, ill-clothed,



General Arthur St. Clair, First Governor of the Territory  
Northwest of the River Ohio.

[illegible]



armless, untrained recruits. From being a quiet little settlement of pioneers the infant Cincinnati now became a busy workshop where hundreds of men, furnished only with rude tools and makeshift paraphernalia, attempted to sift out an army for a trying campaign in the northern woods. The despair that Braddock knew was felt as keenly by unfortunate St. Clair; from the men who flocked to him he had to choose smiths, harness-makers, wheelwrights, and carpenters to do the work which ought to have been entirely completed at Pittsburg or in the East; nearly all the ammunition had to be prepared here, a laboratory built, shells filled with powder, artillery cartridges loaded, gun carriages made, and almost every gun that the militiamen brought had to be repaired. A great deal of the supplies which were received had been injured or were unfit for use; the powder was of a miserably inferior quality, the tents would not shed rain, the axes bent instead of cut, forges which had been sent *lacked anvils*, and the pack saddles were "big enough for elephants."

But St. Clair had the indomitable hopefulness of a Braddock, an equally vain belief in his star; in one way or another the army got on its feet, and, though a cripple, it was able to hobble away from the Ohio on September 17th. On the 7th of the preceding August St. Clair had moved the army six miles from Fort Washington along what is now Mad Anthony Street in Cincinnati, to Ludlow's Station, now Cummingsville, in order that the troops might get away from the influence of the dram-shops that clung to Fort Washington like barnacles. The army, on paper, was two thousand three hundred strong, and the problem

of forwarding provisions in sufficient quantities was to prove a task of greater proportions than any St. Clair had yet faced; in this as in other instances the poor man was compelled to trust in the judgment and capability of others, and wherever he did so it seems that he was doomed to disappointment. Some of the embittered letters that now passed between him and the army contractors make one recall the equally angry remonstrances of the deceived Braddock when he found that the colonies in whom he had been told to trust were absolutely unmoved. On the 8th of October, instead of having ninety thousand rations as the contractors had promised, St. Clair wrote that he should not have an ounce forty-eight hours later.

If you found the transportation impracticable, you ought to have informed me, that I might have taken means to have got supplies forwarded, *or not have committed my army to the wilderness*. . . . No disappointment should have happened which was in the power of money to prevent; and the money could certainly have prevented any here . . . Want of drivers will be no excuse to a starving army and a disappointed people.

It may be gathered from the temper of this correspondence that it was a desperate undertaking to send horses heavily loaded to the forests that lay between the Ohio and Lake Erie. The delays occasioned by the lack of stores held St. Clair's army back as though each man was dragging a cannon; passing Fort Hamilton, which had been built on the site of Hamilton, Ohio, between September 17th and October 4th, and was the first in the chain of forts that was to connect the Ohio River and Lake Erie, the army reached Fort Jefferson on October 11th and built a second fortification near the present Fort Jefferson, Ohio. A week's

pause was made where Greenville, Ohio, now stands while the hungry army waited for the necessary provisions. Desertions had been common from the very beginning and now increased; on the last day of October as many as sixty men deserted in a crowd and started back toward the Ohio, threatening to seize the provision train that was coming on.

Lack of provisions was St. Clair's sorest handicap but it was not all; personally his duties had an added heaviness because of physical ailment and because of a serious estrangement between him and General Butler. Since being reprimanded at Pittsburg by the Secretary of War on account of delays for which he was perhaps not responsible, Butler had lost interest in his work and lost confidence in his commander; under the circumstances, writhing under what seemed to him unjust criticisms, it was easy for him to precipitate a quarrel which began when he led the van of the army from Fort Hamilton in a slightly different formation from that ordered by General St. Clair. For this St. Clair took him to task, and, a little later, when Butler requested to be allowed to lead a flying column in advance of the army for a preliminary attack upon the Indians, St. Clair denied the request with what seemed to be scant courtesy; in this he acted on the supposition that men needed more food to run than to walk and there was not enough for them as it was; a flying column under the circumstances was a patent absurdity.

On the third day of November the army made its last day's march, camping that night on the present site of Fort Recovery, Ohio. The day had been cold and the sickly St. Clair had been borne all day on a

litter. Just before camp was pitched a broken wagon had held the army up for a little while and one of the soldiers left record that St. Clair and several officers met around a fire the wagoners had built and discussed the present situation of the army. "The General observed," wrote this soldier, "that he Did not think the Indians was watching the motions of the army with a view to attack them, other than Steal horses or Catch a person if they had a Chance." Never was a general more mistaken. For days and days the out-riders of Little Turtle had been watching St. Clair's crippled army limp onward through the woods, and now he was ready to close the trap into which Braddock the second had been compelled to walk.

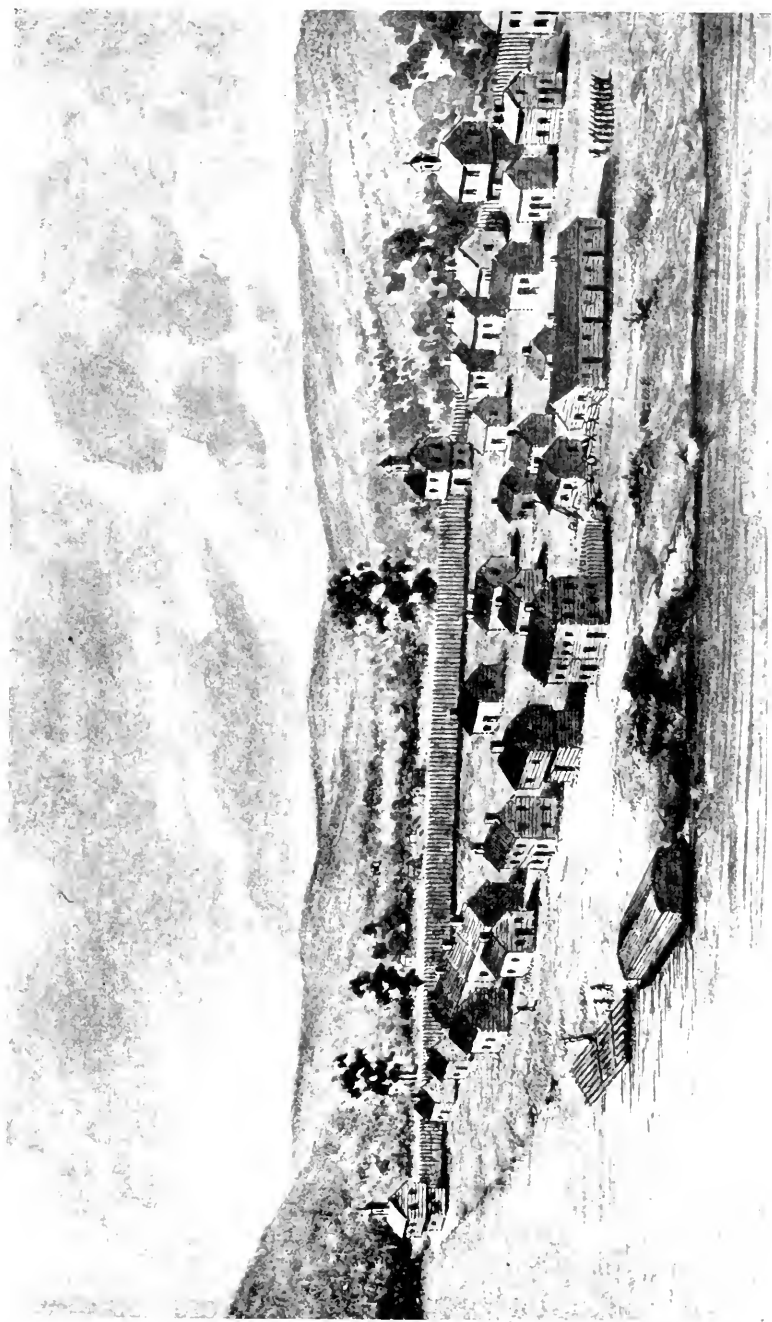
A little before dawn on the fourth day of November the advanced sentries posted on the outskirts of St. Clair's army were driven in by a rush of the ochred cohorts of the allied Indian army. There were those in the army that had expected this very thing, aye, had been planning all night for it. It's a miserable story when sifted to the bottom, for it becomes clear that some one through ignorance or over-confidence or jealousy had failed to do his duty: a scouting party had been sent out at midnight by some of the more suspicious officers, and, while lying beside the Indian trail a mile or more from camp, had distinctly heard the savages worming their way through the leaves on every side upon the sleeping army. The leader of this scouting party, Captain Slough, came hurrying back with his ominous report. From Colonel Oldham he went to Colonel Gibson's tent and from there to General Butler's; that officer heard the story beside the fire in front of his tent where he was warming his

hands; having heard it he dismissed Slough and told him to go to sleep. The important message never reached St. Clair and the army did not know of the savages' presence or advance until the rattle of their muskets sounded through the floating fogs.

The battle of the Wabash, as it is known from the stream by which the army lay, was fought very much on the order of the other Braddock's defeat. The American army was posted on a slight rising ground with the enemy almost surrounding it on lower ground; time and again savage attacks were made by small bodies of militia and as often the Indian army gave way at the point attacked; but the rally was rapid and almost complete and in every case the retiring Americans were followed up and annoyed. By the middle of the morning the fight settled down into a slow sullen combat in which the Americans had almost no more hope of success than of retreating when defeated. The officers were brave; General Butler was soon mortally wounded and St. Clair had horse after horse shot under him; as the lesser officers disappeared one by one the rank and file became more unmanageable, and when, at last, the retreat began it took on the appearance as one eye-witness states "of the stampeding of a herd of crazed cattle." Down the narrow track the survivors rushed, throwing away arms and even clothing in the one hope of making a rapid retreat. Never was greater disorder known on Braddock's Road than was seen here on St. Clair's path; in the rear a few companies kept together as a rearguard, and with these came the ill-fated commander, who was almost the last to leave the battlefield. But the services of the rearguard were

unnecessary; on the night before the battle the army had numbered fourteen hundred men and eighty-six officers and of these eight hundred and ninety-four men and officers were killed or wounded; the blood-thirsty Indians could not get past that thickly strewn battle-ground and did not therefore follow the army. Retreat continued to Fort Jefferson, Fort Hamilton, and Fort Washington on the Ohio. The rout could not have been more complete. There now seemed to be no question but that the Indians had made good their claim and that the "River of Many White Caps," after all, was to be the boundary between the red men and the white.

The space of time that elapsed between St. Clair's defeat and the marching of a new army northward from the Ohio was exactly the same as that which elapsed between Braddock's terrible defeat in the Old French War and the capture of Fort Duquesne by General Forbes; for three years, in each case, the Indians who had proved their prowess in both battles were left free to throw their murderous raiders upon the long frontiers. If anything, St. Clair's defeat was more disastrous to the cause of an advancing civilization than Braddock's; the alliance now between the Indians and British was almost as open and effective as it was in the old days between the Indians and French; the scene of the present war was far removed from the centre of population, for not only were the Alleghenies to be overcome, but the snag-strewn Ohio River was to be descended, and then a longer march made northward from Cincinnati than Braddock's entire route from the Potomac to Pittsburg; but, as the far-seeing Pitt found a more able man than Braddock or at least a more



The Settlement at "the Point" at Marietta, Ohio, about 1790.

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fortunate one, so Washington now picked from the dozen or more Revolutionary veterans a man as able as St. Clair and far more fortunate.

This man was "Mad Anthony" Wayne, well known for his daring and impetuosity; indeed it was these very qualities which had given him wide reputation that made it more difficult for the President to place upon his shoulders this important trust; for it was feared that what had brought Wayne success in the more formal campaigns of the Revolution might bring him defeat in the informal sort of warfare that was practised in the western woods. In vain had Washington warned St. Clair again and again against a surprise; would the advice be heeded any better by this dashing hero of West Point than it was by the sober, gallant Scotchman?

If haste had been the watchword during the war so far, deliberation was now its substitute, and everything was undertaken in due season. In the first place efforts of various kinds were made to bring about a peaceful solution of the question at stake; emissaries of peace were sent northward one after another from Cincinnati, but very few of them lived to bring back any report; in fact word was sent down from the Indian country to the effect that the road thither was "Bloody Way," and that all who came over it would find it so to their sorrow. Both among the Iroquois of New York and the Wabash tribes of Illinois the government, through two ambassadors, Samuel Kirtland and General Rufus Putnam, sought to establish communication between the United States Government and the allied Indian tribes on the Maumee, but without effect. Thus the year of 1792 wore away; a little activity had

been shown along that bloody path and Fort St. Clair, near the present Eaton, Ohio, had been erected as a half-way station between Fort Hamilton and Fort Jefferson; but there was little or no communication between the frail line of forts; "the President of the United States," exclaimed a Shawanese chief, "must know well why the blood is so deep in our path . . . he has sent messengers of peace on these bloody roads, who fell on the way."

But a messenger was now slowly starting for that Indian lair who was to bring peace on the point of his sword. Throughout the year 1792, Wayne's army was gathered at Pittsburg and in November the army was moved down the Ohio to a point twenty-two miles below Pittsburg and seven miles above Fort McIntosh, where a permanent camp, called by the name of Legionville, was established, "out of reach of whiskey," as Wayne wrote the Secretary of War. Here, through the winter, this army was drilled with great severity, the incompetent being sifted out and sent away; so when, in the following April, Wayne set sail on the Ohio for Cincinnati, it was with a better army so far as morale and discipline were concerned than had ever appeared in the West.

Wayne landed a mile below Fort Washington and encamped on the only piece of high ground available and called it "Hobson's Choice"; the village of Cincinnati came within a few hundred yards of the outposts, and from its stock "of ardent spirit and caitiff wretches to dispose of it," Wayne was as anxious to be separated as was the case at Pittsburg.

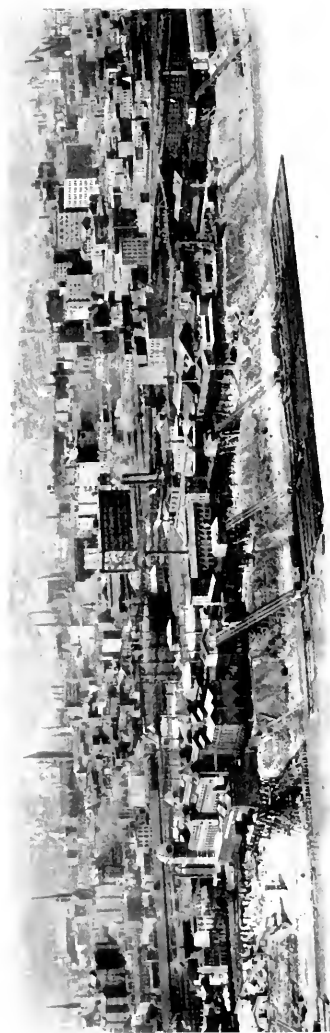
By the beginning of October, the army had been thoroughly drilled and prepared for an exhausting

campaign and now the word came that all peaceful measures had failed and that Wayne and his men should at once proceed up the "Bloody Way." His force was twenty-six hundred regulars and three hundred and sixty mounted soldiers. ". . . You may rest assured," Wayne wrote Secretary Knox upon leaving Fort Washington, "that I will not commit the legion or risk an engagement unnecessarily; and unless more powerfully supported . . . I will content myself by taking a strong position advanced of Fort Jefferson, and by exerting every power, endeavor to protect the frontiers; and to secure the posts and army during the winter." The winter was spent at a new fort, Fort Greenville, on the present site of Greenville, Ohio, and the final advance on the Indian lines was not begun until the last of the following July. Building Fort Recovery, on the site of St. Clair's battle-field, during the winter, Fort Adams was erected on the St. Mary, early in August, making the seventh fort on the line from the Ohio River. On the 8th of August, the army had hurried down the Anglaize and had begun building Fort Defiance on the Maumee, on the present site of Defiance, Ohio. Leaving this point on the 16th of August, Wayne encountered Little Turtle's lines lying under the debris in a cyclone's path, two miles in length, its left wing lying on Presqu' Isle in the Maumee. In vain was the well-chosen position to be relied upon; it was the first real charge of those hard-trained soldiers who had learned something of war at Legionville and "Hobson's Choice"; the tactics that had defeated Braddock and St. Clair met their fate at the hands of Wayne; beneath the prostrate trees and tangled wind-rack his soldiers charged the enemy with trailed arms and

picked them out of their hiding-places with the bayonet. The victory was complete and the battle of Fallen Timber ranks among the decisive battles of America. But it was won at Legionville and "Hobson's Choice"—months before it was ever fought; it had been made doubly sure by the tactics of Wayne as he marched to and fro building his forts and hurrying his outriders far in advance. The Indian confederacy was utterly demoralized and in the year following signed a treaty at Fort Greenville which was practically a reaffirmation of the two treaties of Fort Harmar and Fort McIntosh.

Fort Washington, which, as we have seen, was the immediate base of supplies during the three campaigns which lead to the treaty of Greenville, became the most important town in Judge Symmes's Miami Purchase—the beautiful "Queen City of the West." From 1788 to 1790, Colonel Israel Ludlow conducted the surveying for Judge Symmes and a small number of cabins formed the nucleus of the great city it was to be. A heavy growth of beech trees, many of them of the largest size, stood on the bank of the river; in order to make a parade ground at "Hobson's Choice," General Wayne had to cut down a large number of trees and dig out the stumps. On the second bottom the old forest was heavy with beech, ash, black walnut, hickory, and red, white, and black oak of vigorous growth, including some poplar.

My father, mother and seven children [Mrs. Rebecca Reeder has left record] landed at Cincinnati on the eighth of February, 1789 . . . . There were three little cabins here when we landed, where the surveyors and chain-carriers lived. They had no floors in these cabins. There were three other women here besides my mother. . . . Mr. Ludlow came down to our boat



The River Front at Cincinnati, Ohio.  
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and invited my father and mother up to stay in their cabin until we could get one built, but my mother thought they could remain more comfortably with their small children in their boat. So we lived in our boat until the ice began to run, and then we were forced to contrive some other way to live. What few men there were here got together and knocked our boats up and built us a camp. We lived in our camp six weeks. Then my father built us a large cabin, which was the first one large enough for a family to live in. We took the boards of our camp and made floors in our house. Father intended to have built our house on the corner of Walnut and Water streets, but not knowing exactly where the streets were, he built our house right in the middle of Water street. The streets were laid out but the woods were so very thick, and the streets were not opened, so it was impossible to tell where the streets would be. By May first the population increased to eleven families and twenty-four unmarried men; the number of log cabins was now twenty, and nearly all of the large trees had been cut down between Water Street and Broadway, south of Second Street, although the logs, or many of them, remained on the ground for several years afterward.

The surveying of the Symmes' tract was completed this month and lots were disposed of during 1789 and 1790 to about two hundred and fifty people.

The number of cabins in Cincinnati was twenty-five, in 1719. Fort Washington, which had been begun in June, 1789, by Major Doughty, stood on Third Street between Broadway and Ludlow streets; General Harmar arrived at Fort Washington on the 29th day of December, 1789, and three days later, on the first day of the year, General St. Clair arrived on a flat-boat and was escorted to the fort amidst an artillery salute of fourteen guns. On the next day the County of Hamilton was erected, and commissions for the County Court of Common Pleas and General Quarter Sessions were granted by

the Governor for the County of Hamilton. That evening, at a banquet tendered to St. Clair by the military and citizens, he formally changed the name of the settlement to Cincinnati.

The conditions that existed in the little town during the Indian war were not unlike those which war always brings, but with the signing of the treaty of Greenville a rapid advance began. In 1810 there were 242 frame houses in the town and fifty-five log cabins, eighty-six brick houses and fourteen of stone; there were thirty-one looms, and 230 spinning-wheels; 750 yards of woolen cloth had been made during the year, 2967 yards of cotton cloth, 2098 yards of linen cloth, 685 yards of mixed cloth. The inhabitants under ten years of age were 387 males and 365 females; between ten and sixteen, 167 males and 142 females; between sixteen and twenty-six, 286 males and 241 females; between twenty-six and forty-five, 297 males and 217 females; over forty-five, 106 males and seventy-eight females; including eighty colored persons, the total population was 2340. The sale of town lots always indicates the rapidity of a city's growth; for several years after the beginning of the Cincinnati settlement lots along the main streets sold for less than one hundred dollars but gradually increased in price, until about 1805 very high figures were commanded. For a few years then the rate of increase was slower until 1811, when lots on Main Street from Front to Third sold as high as two hundred dollars per front foot; from thence to Sixth Street at one hundred dollars; in Broadway, Front, and Market streets, \$280 to \$120.

The Cincinnati historian, Daniel Drake, affirmed Cincinnati was laid out on the model of Philadelphia.



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Between Broadway and Western Row [he writes] there are six streets, each sixty-six feet wide, running from the river north sixteen degrees, and lying three hundred and ninety-six feet asunder. These are intersected at right angles by others of the same width, and at the same distance from each other; except Water and Front streets, and Second and Third streets the former of which are nearer, and the latter, on account of the brow of the hill, more distant. Not a single alley, court, or diagonal street, and but one common was laid out. The blocks or squares were each divided into eight lots, ninety-nine by one hundred and ninety-eight feet, except those lying between Second and Third streets, which made ten lots each; and those between Front and Water streets, the size of which may be seen by a reference to the frontispiece. The out-lots, eighty-one in number, contain four acres each, and lie chiefly in the north of the town. This plan was not deposited in the public archives for record until the 29th of April, 1802. The streets in that part of the town laid out by John C. Symmes are but sixty feet wide. Those intersecting the river run north forty-four degrees west, and lie at the same distance from each other as the streets in the original town; but the cross streets are nearer, and hence the lots of this quarter are shorter. The plan of this survey was not recorded by the proprietor till the 12th of September, 1811. The reservation of the General Government was surveyed so as to connect the plats just described. . . .

The Donations by the original proprietors are, a tract between Front Street and the river, extending from Broadway to Main Street, for a public common; and a square west of Main Street, between Fourth and Fifth streets. The south half of this was conveyed to the First Presbyterian Congregation; and the other to the Commissioners of the county; an amount in each case, nearly equal to the value of the ground, being paid.

The eminent historian W. H. Venable writes thus of the awakening of the great city<sup>1</sup>:

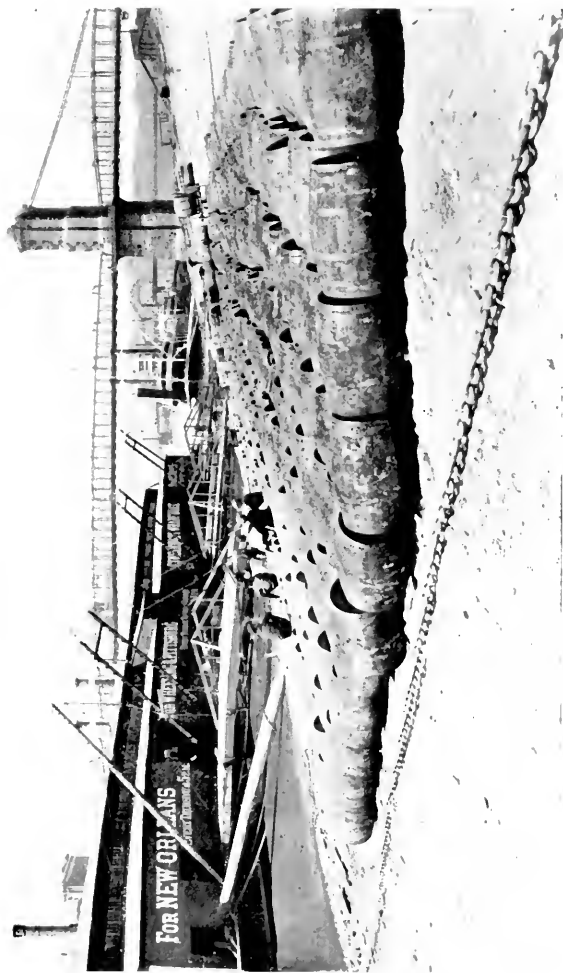
The Queen City, like many other American cities, was farmland before it was houses. The ground on which the business

<sup>1</sup> *Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio*, pp. 61-76.

part lies, and that on the top of the surrounding plateaus, was as rich as soil can be. Even the side-hills and the abandoned quarries are fertile, and soon clothe themselves with luxurious vegetation. Almost every original lot-holder planted a garden and an orchard. In 1795, Dr. Allison, Surveyor-General of the Army, had, we are told, on the east side of the fort, a large lot cultivated as a garden and fruitery, known as Peach Grove. Also, we read in the old records, that in 1795-1800, Hezekiah Flint cultivated, as a cornfield, the square between Fourth, Fifth, Walnut, and Vine streets. At the same period, the grounds where the Cincinnati Hospital now stands were a half-cleared field overrun with blackberries. On the slope to the river, between Main and Walnut, was a small vineyard, probably the first in the Ohio Valley. There must have been at least a suggestion of apples on Walnut street, which was called "Cider street," by our not totally abstinent fathers. We still have an Orchard street, as well as a Vine, a Plum, and a Cherry street.

The cluster of log cabins, into which the forest oaks, beeches, and maples were turned, grew by aggregation, and spread from street to street, square to square, covering the fertile acres. The little town opposite the mouth of the Licking lengthened up and down the Ohio shore, and widened toward the hills, filling up the space of the bottom lands. Then the ambitious city began to climb the terraces, and to take possession of the uplands. The stimulating cause of this growth and expansion was agriculture. The surrounding country fed the town, and fattened it. The farms nourished the trade-centre, and were, in turn, made valuable by the reaction of commerce. "Nothing," says Charles Cist, our best early annalist of the Miami Country, "Nothing could surpass the fertility of the soil, which was as mellow as an ash-heap. Benjamin Randolph planted an acre which he had no time to hoe, being obliged to leave the settlement for New Jersey. When he returned, he found one hundred bushels of corn ready for husking."

By the close of the eighteenth century the commerce of the young city had assumed considerable magnitude. From February to May, 1802, there were exported from Cincinnati



The Cincinnati Levee and Suspension Bridge.  
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4,457 barrels of flour. Martin Baum (builder of the Sinton residence on Pike street) had recently organized the "Miami Exporting Company." The day of small things was drawing to a close. The Ohio river was to add to her proud title, the Beautiful, the mercantile epithet, Useful. The merchants began to call the town an "Emporium," and some spoke of it as a new Tyre. The *Ohio Gazette*, of Marietta, was not so sanguine in regard to the growth of commerce and the importance of river navigation. Harman Blennerhassett wrote for its columns in 1804: "It will forever remain impracticable for shipping to perform a return voyage against the current of our great rivers." But the steamboat was soon to be invented, and to that invention our city owes the rapid development of her commerce before the time of railroads. Mr. Carnegie has estimated that, in 1884, the annual trade of the Ohio river alone amounted to eight hundred million dollars! The river brings annually to Cincinnati two million five hundred thousand tons of coal.

The early commerce of Cincinnati depended mainly upon water transportation. The first regular ferry between Cincinnati and Newport was established in 1792. The first regular line of keel boats plied between our city and Marietta in 1794. Of course Pittsburg, Gallipolis, Wheeling, and Maysville were sources of supply to the young markets of the Miami settlements. In due time, navigation extended not only along the main water courses—the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri—but also up the larger tributaries of these streams. The exporting association of Cincinnati established commercial relations with Europe, by way of New Orleans, a city which long held pre-eminence over all other cities in the Mississippi Valley, in population and trade. Many ships were built and rigged in yards along the Ohio, and the marine commerce came to be closely associated with the river business.

The situation and environment of Cincinnati destined it to become a manufacturing city. Every condition favors mechanical industry, and the practice of the liberal arts. The resources of the country around invited to discovery and provoked to invention. The forest yielded best timber for building; the

near quarry offered limestone; the clay was good material for brick; the mine produced coal and iron. Raw material from the farm demanded to be metamorphosed into food and clothing.

One of the first experiments of Robinson Crusoe, on his solitary island, was the attempt to make vessels of clay. The potter's wheel began to turn in Cincinnati as early, at least, as the year 1799, when William McFarland started the manufacture of earthenware, thus inaugurating an industry which has since made our city distinguished over the world. Brick making was not undertaken until 1805. Guns were necessary to the backwoodsman. The first gunsmith of Cincinnati was Andrew Danseth, who set up his shop in 1800. Cotton and woollen fabrics were woven by Cincinnati looms before the year 1809.

Mr. John Melish, an English traveller who visited Cincinnati in 1811, mentions that there were, at that time, in the place, cabinetmakers, coopers, turners, machinemakers, wheelwrights, smiths, coppersmiths, tinnerns, silversmiths, tanners, saddlers, boot and shoe makers, glovers, tailors, spinners, weavers, dyers, printers, book binders, rope-makers, and bricklayers, certainly a respectable array of guilds.

The manufacturing of malt liquors, now conducted here on a prodigious scale, seems to have originated in the first decade of the century. The first Cincinnati brewery, the property of John Embree, was located on the river bank at the foot of Race street. The annual product of the establishment, in 1811, was five thousand barrels of beer and porter. A Cincinnati brewery in the World's Fair exhibit at Chicago, in 1893, displayed, as an advertisement, a booth with fixtures and decorations costing ten thousand dollars! Cincinnati's annual product of beer is nearly twenty-five million gallons.

The business of pork-packing, which gave the city the disagreeable title of "Porkopolis," but which also, like the equally unpoetical whiskey business, did much to lay the foundations of her prosperity and to enrich individuals, was carried on in Cincinnati as early as 1812, by Richard Fosdick, and by others. In the pork trade Cincinnati held the pre-eminence



Cincinnati Southern Railway Bridge, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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above all other cities of the world, until the distinction was captured some years ago by a younger western city.

An old citizen of Cincinnati, writing in 1855, and referring to a time before the city had much encroached on the plateau, says: "At that time these hills formed a border of such surpassing beauty, around the plain on which Cincinnati stood, as to cause us who remember them in their beauty, almost to regret the progress of improvement which has taken from us what it can never restore." Fortunately the grand features of the wide-spreading infinitely varied plateau, that, like the terraces of an amphitheatre, half encircle the city on the east, north, west, have, thus far, been devoted mainly to residential purposes, and to gardens, parks, reservoirs, and public resorts which add to, rather than detract from, the original attractiveness of the scene. It is upon these majestic hill-tops that the Queen City of the West really had her throne. Twenty-five years ago, James Parton, writing for the *Atlantic Monthly*, used the following language: "Behold the Fifth avenue of Cincinnati! It is not merely the pleasant street of villas and gardens along the brow of the hill, though that is part of it. Mount to the cupola of the Mount Auburn Young Ladies' School, which stands near the highest point, and look out over a sea of beautifully formed, umbrageous hills, steep enough to be picturesque, but not too steep to be convenient, and observe that upon each summit, as far as the eye can reach, is an elegant cottage or mansion, or a cluster of beautiful villas surrounded by groves, gardens, and lawns. This is Cincinnati's Fifth avenue. Here reside the families enriched by the industry of the low, smoky town. Here upon these enchanting hills and in these inviting valleys will finally gather the greater part of the population, leaving the city to the smoke and heat, when the labors of the day are done. As far as we have seen or read, no inland city in the world surpasses Cincinnati, in the beauty of its environs. They present as perfect a combination of the picturesque and the accessible as can anywhere be found. There are still the primeval forests and the virgin soil to favor the plans of the artist in 'capabilities.' The Duke of Newcastle's party, one of whom was the Prince of Wales, were not

flattering their entertainers when they pronounced the suburbs of Cincinnati the finest they had anywhere seen."

Cincinnati holds a very respectable rank among cities on the score of architectural achievements. The greater number of her public buildings were designed by home architects and constructed by local builders. The city, however, boasts of one of the noblest designs of Richardson—namely, the Chamber of Commerce building, on the southwest corner of Fourth and Vine streets. The City Hall, the Armory, the great Exposition and Music Hall, and the Odeon, all designed by Hannaford, are among the most imposing of our public buildings. The Art Museum and the Art Academy, in Eden Park, are noble specimens of the work of the architect, McLaughlin. The government building, in which are the post-office, the custom house, and the United States courts, was designed by Mullet.

The rate of increase of population for the past eighty years has been regular and comparatively rapid. The population in 1810 was 750; in 1820, 9,602; in 1830, 24,831; in 1840, 46,338; in 1850, 115,438; in 1860, 161,044; in 1870, 216,239; in 1880, 255,139; in 1890, 296,308. The city now occupies forty-three square miles; its population, January 1, 1905, was over four hundred thousand. The net public debt was thirty-one million; and the assessed valuation of all taxable property \$224,139,960; the tax rate was 2.25. The total foreign born population is 57,961; of this 38,219 are German born.

But numbers are not the only or the chief thing that makes a city great. Not how many but what kind of men determines the character of a community. Every city, in the long run, finds its true mission in the world's affairs, and fulfils its destiny. Cincinnati has passed through several phases of development, and present indications seem to promise for her a high career in the skilled industries, liberal arts, and in enterprises social, intellectual, and æsthetic. No longer is she called Porkopolis or the Tyre of the West, but the City of Beautiful Suburbs, the Paris of America, the Central Metropolis of Art and Music, the Social Capital of the Ohio Valley.



Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Bridge, Cincinnati, Ohio.  
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## Chapter IX.

### The Reign of Outlaw and Rowdy.

THE pioneers who entered the Ohio Valley after its conquest from the aborigines found it to be a beautiful gem very much in the rough.

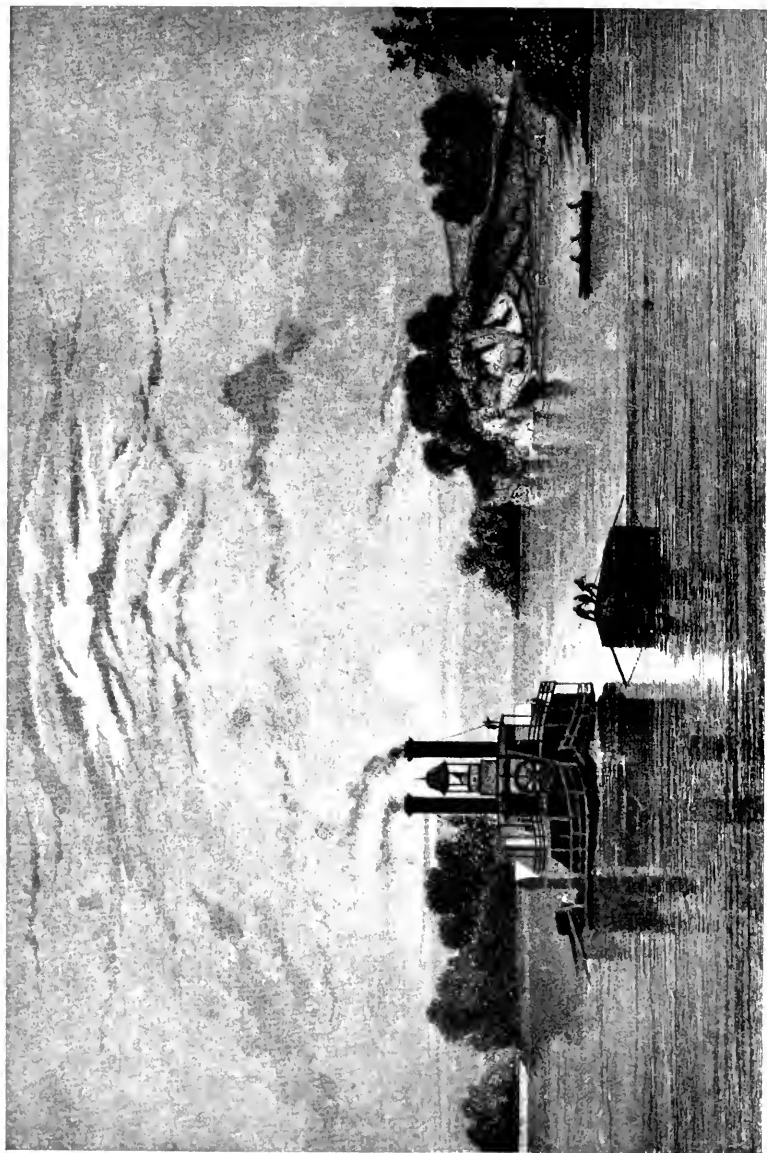
Savage conditions did not prevail, it is true, so far as scalping and burning at the stake were typical of them, but it was many years before life and property were safe from outlaws, and more before rowdies and rowdyism ceased to menace liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The lawless condition of the land, and its comparatively small number of inlaws made the West a haven for outlaws, from the southern and eastern States; once over the mountains and afloat on the Ohio all such men were free to turn over life's leaf and begin anew. Perhaps some did this, though we have heard more of those who did not.

But the West was not dependent upon the East for its desperadoes and cutthroats; the home industry, Indian fighting, had raised up a class of "caitiff wretches," as one general called them, that would have done honor to the docks and grog-shops of any Atlantic seaboard city. Drifting about from place to place setting up claims for land that rightfully belonged to others, now and then, if the exigency of the case demanded, committing brutal murder, and at all times brawling in grog-shops and pilfering along the rivers,

the outlaws of the "Ohio country" gained a national reputation. But it will be readily admitted that in this matter there has been a vast deal of exaggeration; there was but one Harpe, and but one Harpe's head raised on a pole; yet to read some pages one would believe there was a Harpe's head on every tree in the West, and an uncouth murderer behind every bush that grew along the wild Ohio's bank of flowers. Every new country must needs suffer, it seems, from the pens of travellers who portray exceptional incidents so vividly as to make the exception seem the commonplace. And it is also true that local historians have been guilty of exaggeration of events in their own localities; many small affairs have assumed great proportions under the gentle breath of legend.

The lower Ohio River was very sparsely settled until a comparatively late date and in pioneer days this portion of the river was for a time a noted resort for bands of pirates from whose hands the descending flatboatman did well to steer clear. Cave-in-Rock, on the Illinois shore near the present hamlet of that name, was a notorious rendezvous for a number of years. This is a cavern measuring about two hundred feet long and eighty feet wide; at its mouth it is eighty feet wide and twenty-five feet high. The floor was very smooth throughout, and the walls arose in grades like seats in a theatre. Strange hieroglyphics dating far back into prehistoric days covered the gloomy walls. The mystery of the place was enhanced by another room-like apartment over the cavern; the passage-way to this second cavern was like a huge chimney some fourteen feet long. Since about the time of the War of 1812, if not before, this grotto has borne the name



Cave-in-Rock, Illinois.





Cave-in-Rock; above it towers a rocky eminence into which the gruelling hands of the floods have torn this aperture.

Early in the century a man named Wilson brought his family to this river stronghold and made it his home. More than that, he threw the home open to the passing public and mounted his hospitable sign, "Wilson's Liquor Vault and House of Entertainment," where now the passer-by reads "St. Jacob's Oil"; if the proprietor's liquids were not a balm it was not because there were not broken heads to mend. For the idea gained for its originator all the returns that his ingenuity deserved; flatboats were continually passing down the river to Mississippi ports and a grog-shop at the water's edge was a feature that at that day and that place could not fail to attract both the curious and the thirsty. As evil never fails to carry in it the seeds of its own undoing, so here the House of Entertainment soon gathered a plotting band of guerillas headed by none other than Wilson, the proprietor, which began a murderous confidence game that takes rank in the West with the worst of outrages. The "gang" made its headquarters on nearby Hurricane Island and the plan of operations was fiendishly simple; flatboats en route, for instance, to New Orleans, and richly laden, were inveigled to the cave, where in short order the commander and crew were made way with, and a crew from the island took charge of the boat and floated it to New Orleans; here the cargo and boat were sold and upon returning to Cave-in-Rock the proceeds were divided. Many circumstances combined to make this conspiracy safe and the conspirators wholly free from suspicion. The danger of river travel on the Ohio and

Mississippi was great, and so many boats were wrecked that the owners of any one of the captured boats could easily account for their loss on the score of dangerous navigation. Then, too, there were the dangers of the return overland trip from New Orleans in case the boat did reach its destination in safety; this journey through Tennessee and Kentucky, as will be shown, was perilous in the extreme for those carrying money. Thus the desperadoes at Hurricane Island were not suspected for some time, and it was longer still before the scattered population of that region took the matter into its hands. Wilson's band numbered nearly fifty; many of these escaped before the storm broke; a few were taken prisoners. A large price was set on Wilson's head and, to obtain it, one of his own murderous gang killed him. "Not long after," writes so good an authority as Collins, "in the upper room of his mysterious cavern were found about sixty skeletons, which confirmed the tale of systematic confidence, betrayal, and murder."

As the pirates' ships hung ever around the watery track of the richly laden East Indiamen, so land pirates in all countries have laid in wait along the paths which were used by laden wagons or ponies or along which merchants passed with the profits of their enterprise.

In the early history of the Ohio Valley there was a famous path which well might have borne that title given by the Ohio Indians to the route on which so many emissaries of peace had been murdered—"the Bloody Way." This was the worn trail northward from New Orleans through Mississippi and Tennessee to Kentucky over which came the returning boatmen or shipper's agents bringing northward the money paid

for their goods in southern markets. This path with its red tales of bloodshed indicates the distance of markets which was such a handicap to all early settlers in the Ohio Valley. Until well along in the nineteenth century there were no markets of note short of lower Mississippi ports. The return trip with goods by water was a very laborious operation, occupying weeks of severest labor with oar, sail, and cordelle; it was more common to ask for cash than for goods in trade, and unless the merchant or merchant's agent returned by the roundabout sea-route the short road home was this "Tennessee Path." Often the path was the route of drovers taking cattle southward for sale; the path was the natural route homeward. Of the scores of famous crimes on this long path which ran through the Indian territory the murder of Dr. John P. Sanderson, as told at length in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* of November, 1870, is one of the most singular.

In the year 1817, Dr. John P. Sanderson, a rich planter living near Natchez, started northward to Kentucky to purchase slaves for his plantation. He carried with him a quantity of money for his purchase and en route fell in with one John C. Hamilton who had brought a drove of cattle South and was returning with the proceeds of a sale he had effected. In the wild and sparsely-settled "Indian Territory," through which the trail ran, Sanderson fell ill. On their arrival in Barren County, Kentucky, the Doctor went to the home of Hamilton's father where the two remained several days. When he was ready to proceed John Hamilton set out to act as a guide for a few miles. Sanderson was never seen alive again; a posse of citizens scoured the country and found his body beside

the highway, beyond the point where Hamilton said he had accompanied the unfortunate man, covered with brush and briers. His hat was found in a hollow stump and his brass horse pistol with the hammer broken lay near by. This hammer was found imbedded in the dead man's head, and in the lining of the hat was found a list of thirty-three one-hundred-dollar Mississippi bank bills.

Hamilton was arrested and the bills called for in the list were in his possession, and his "sherry-vallies" were found hid near his father's barn, blood-spattered. Hamilton maintained that he had given Kentucky money to Sanderson for his Mississippi bills, which were at a discount at the North, and that his sherry-vallies had been stolen from him and worn to a dance by his negroes. In defence he also proved his faithfulness in nursing Dr. Sanderson throughout his illness. Yet such was the spirit of the enraged people that he was convicted and hung for the murder. The real culprits had succeeded in fastening on a guiltless man the stigma of their crime; for many years later a Vicksburg planter, Colonel Gibson, informed Hon. Richard H. Rousseau, then U. S. Minister to Central America, that a criminal about to be hung for murder in eastern Mississippi had confessed under the gallows that he and a fellow-outlaw had murdered Dr. Sanderson.

Micajah Harpe was the outlaw, par excellence, of the Ohio Valley, as Mike Fink was the rowdy. They are not typical; their deeds establish a high-water mark of brutality and rowdyism; others aped them, but none excelled. Harpe could hardly have borne a more fitting name, with all its revolting allusion to classic times. He was above medium stature, bony and



Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio.



muscular, powerful of limb, broad of chest—in short, of heroic mould. If he was extraordinary in physical strength, he was not less extraordinary in appearance; according to his biographers no man's face was more revolting. "Instead of the healthy hue which indicates the social emotions," writes Collins, "there was a livid unnatural redness, resembling that of a dried and lifeless skin. His face, which was larger than ordinary, exhibited the lines of ungovernable passion, and the complexion announced that the ordinary feelings of the human breast were in him extinguished."

When he entered the Ohio Basin, presumably from North Carolina, he was accompanied by his younger brother, Wiley Harpe, of less gigantic proportions but of hardly less revolting appearance. With them came three women, two of them the "wives" of the greater Harpe and one that of the lesser. At the opening of the story of their last and most desperate outrage the wives of the Harpes were living but a few miles from Henderson, Kentucky, on the Ohio River, and their husbands were journeying to them, preparatory to moving through Kentucky toward the South. Entering Hopkins County they passed through the wild region south of Green River in the guise of Methodist preachers, dressed in broadcloth coats, but well horsed and well armed. Stopping at the home of James Tompkins, near Steuben's Lick, they carried out their rôle to the end, one of them saying grace at the table with deliberation and at great length. Their host acknowledged that his powder-horn was nearly empty, whereupon the good Samaritans generously divided with him their supply. Proceeding on toward the Ohio River they passed the home of Moses Stigall, five

miles on, and that of Peter Ruby, eleven miles from Stigall's. In a day or so they reached their wives and began the return journey with precipitation—undoubtedly planning deliberately to leave a broad trail of blood in their wake. Hon. Joseph R. Underwood leaves the following account of their journey, which he received in part from John B. Ruby, who saw the Harpes at the Ruby cabin on their way to the Ohio River:

They encamped for the night, a few miles from the residence of Stigall, who owed one of the women a dollar. Stigall met the party in the flats of Deer Creek, as he was going to the Robinson Lick, north of the Ohio, for salt, and told the women to call on his wife, and tell her to pay the dollar. He said his wife did not know where he kept his money, and, accordingly, sent proper directions. One or all of the wives of the Harpes went to the house of Stigall, and told his wife what her husband had said. She found his purse, which contained about forty dollars in silver, out of which she paid the dollar due her. The wives told their husbands how much money seemed to be in the pile poured out of the purse. . . . Mrs Stigall was a young woman with only one child. A man named Love was staying that night at the house. The two Harpes left their camp and went to the house . . . got the money, murdered the wife and child and Mr. Love; then set the house on fire, and burnt up the murdered bodies, and all that was in it. Two men named Hudgens and Gilmore were returning from the lick with their packs of salt, and had camped for the night not far from Stigall's. About daylight the Harpes went to their camp, and arrested them upon pretence that they had committed robbery, murder, and arson. . . . They shot Gilmore, who died on the spot. Hudgens broke and ran, but was overtaken . . . and put to death.

News of these murders spread . . . with rapidity. The conclusion was universal that these crimes were the deeds of the Harpes. Large rewards were offered by the Governors of Kentucky and Tennessee for their heads. . . . The pioneers



of the wilderness resolved to capture them. A company was formed, consisting of John Leeper, James Tompkins, Silas Magby, Nevil Lindsey, Mathew Christy, Robert Robertson, and the infuriated Moses Stigall. . . . These men, armed with rifles, got on the trail of the Harpes and overtook them at their camp, upon the waters of Pond River. . . . About a quarter of a mile from camp, the pursuing party saw Little Harpe, and a man named Smith . . . conversing near a branch of water. Little Harpe charged Smith with being a horse-thief and blew in his charger—(a small implement with which the hunter measures his powder for loading his gun). The shrill sound, their usual signal for danger, soon brought Big Harpe to see what was the matter. . . . Big Harpe came mounted on a fine gray mare, the property of the murdered Love. . . . The pursuers, not doubting the guilt of those whom they had overtaken, without warning, fired upon them, badly wounding Smith, but not hitting either of the Harpes. Big Harpe was in the act of shooting Smith. . . . He had already cocked his gun and told Smith he must die. But surprised by the volley. . . he reserved his fire, whirled Love's mare and galloped off to his camp. Little Harpe ran off on foot into a thicket, and was not seen afterward.

The pursuers hastened toward the camp, and saw Big Harpe hastily saddling the horses and preparing to take the women with him. Seeing their rapid approach, he mounted Love's mare, armed with rifle and pistols, and darted off, leaving the women and children to provide for themselves. They were made prisoners. . . . Love's mare was large and strong, and carried the two hundred pounds weight of her rider, Big Harpe, with much ease, and he seemed to call on her to expend all her strength in his behalf. Tompkins, rather a small man, rode a thoroughbred full-blooded bay mare of the best Virginian stock, and led in the pursuit. He had chased thieves before, and the only account he gave of *one* of them was, "that he would never steal another horse." Nance, his mare, exhibited both speed and bottom in this race for life or death. . . . In the first two or three miles Harpe kept far ahead, no one trailing in sight except Tompkins. There was no difficulty in following, through the rich mellow soil of the wilderness, the tracks made

by the horses of Harpe and Tompkins. Leeper was second in the chase and the rest followed as rapidly as possible. As the race progressed, Big Harpe drove into a thick forest of large trees upon a creek bottom. As he approached the stream to cross it he encountered a large poplar tree . . . which had been blown down. . . . The bank was so high and perpendicular that it was impossible to descend and cross the creek with safety, and alike dangerous to attempt jumping over the tree. He retraced his steps to the head of the tree, and there met Tompkins face to face, with some thirty steps between them. Each reined up his steed and stopped. Neither attempted to fire. Tompkins told Harpe that escape was impossible, and he had better surrender. "Never" was the brief reply. Harpe dashed off at full speed, while Tompkins tarried for Leeper. As soon as he came up, he said: "Why did n't you shoot?" Tompkins replied that his mare was so fiery he could not make a safe shot upon her, and he would not fire unless he was sure of execution.

Leeper had fired upon the Harpes at the branch, and finding that his ramrod could not be drawn in consequence of its having got wet, told Tompkins he could not reload, that his horse was failing, and that Harpe would escape unless Nance should catch him. Tompkins replied: "She can run over him upon any part of the ground." Leeper said, "Let us exchange horses and give me your gun and shot-pouch, and I'll bring him down, if I can overtake him." They dismounted, exchanged horses and arms, and Leeper dashed forward after Big Harpe. The noble mare proved her ability to "run over him upon any part of the ground."

Leeper crossed the creek, and, after passing through the thick tall trees in the bottom, came in sight of the fleeing Harpe as he reached higher ground, with its prairie grass and scattered trees. Nance gradually gained. When Leeper came up within thirty yards, Harpe warned him "to stand off, or he would kill him." Leeper replied: "One of us has to die, and the hardest fend off." As the woods became more open and interposed fewer obstructions, Leeper thought he had "a good chance." Suddenly putting Nance to her full speed, he rushed up within ten steps of Harpe, threw his leg over the mane, and the bridle



A United States Life-Saving Station on the Ohio River.



over Nance's head, jumped to the ground, took aim, and fired. Harpe reined up, turned, presented his gun, and it snapped—all without dismounting. Leeper afterwards said: "If Harpe's gun had not snapped, the ball would not have passed within twenty yards of me, so badly was it aimed." Harpe then threw his gun down, wheeled the gray mare, and pushed on his course. From these circumstances, Leeper knew he had hit him. He caught and remounted Nance, and soon overtook Harpe, who told him to keep off, or he would shoot him with a pistol. In a few seconds, Harpe ceased to urge the gray mare forward, and put both his hands to the pommel of the saddle to hold on. Leeper rushed alongside and threw him to the ground. Two balls had entered near his backbone; and come out near the breastbone. Harpe begged that he might be taken to justice and not be put to instant death. Leeper told him his request was useless; that his wound was fatal, and he must soon die. Tompkins and the other pursuers came up one by one. Stigall immediately presented his gun, with a view to blow his brains out; but Harpe moving his head backwards and forwards, so as to prevent it, Stigall placed the muzzle against his body as he lay on the ground, and shot him through the heart.

Thus perished the most brutal monster of the human race. His head was cut off by Stigall. . . . The party intended to use the head in getting the large rewards which had been offered . . . but the heat of summer rendered its preservation impracticable. A tall young tree, growing by the side of the trail or road, was selected, and trimmed of its lateral branches to its top, and then made sharp. On this point the head was fastened. The skull and jaw-bone remained there for many years. The place where this tree grew is in Webster county, and is known upon the map of Kentucky as "Harpe's Head" to this day.

This point is three miles from Dixon, Webster County, and some twenty miles back from the river at a point where the roads from Henderson, Morganfield, and Hopkinsville meet.

The reign of rowdyism in the West was of prolonged

duration, attracting wide attention and gaining for the Ohio Valley particularly a reputation as unique as it was unsavory. The river was the highway of travel and consequently social conditions here came under the eye of hosts of travellers, whose accounts had, often, a wide circulation. Frequently these accounts are told with literal truthfulness and yet, as they stand, are misrepresentations. The West was very new, and one who has read the preceding pages of this history realizes what a struggle the conquest and occupation of the Ohio Basin had been and how naturally this conflict left its impress upon society; early travellers described the fighting and "gouging" of river-men and others as unparalleled; and in a couple of decades other travellers described a swearing and tobacco-spitting generation as equally unparalleled, without realizing that the inhuman era of fighting had passed away and society was moving upward. There was little difference socially between the lowest element in an Ohio River village and the lowest element in the villages eastward of the Alleghenies.

This rowdyism was a natural product of the era of disputes over land and of grubbing. It was a hard time to live or let live; the "good old days" are written and spoken of lightly but they must not be made to cover the first two generations of pioneer life in the West; the life was exhausting, and only its brightest side is represented by the "log-rollings" and "corn-huskings" which are sometimes portrayed as typical of the early days. They were not so, by any manner of means; the forests were to be felled, the great logs rolled together and burned, the families reared and provided for, and usually the land to be paid for—with

markets many miles away. And all this had to be done under the most difficult climatic conditions, the fevers attacking the men at their work in the wet forests, especially along the rivers, with regularity and often with fatal effect. "When this home-building and land-clearing is accomplished," wrote a man who knew what the "old days" were, "a faithful picture would reveal not only the changes that had been wrought, but a host of prematurely broken down men and women, besides an undue proportion resting peacefully in country grave-yards." If one should attempt truly to chronicle merely the hardship and suffering of a day when dentists and rubbers or rubber boots were unknown, the result would be too painful to be interesting reading.

These hard conditions of life on land had their effect on the social fabric; rough work meant, on the average, rough men. On the river the same conditions prevailed; here the work was, perhaps, rougher, and the riverman was in consequence rougher than his neighbor on shore. The professional keelboatman or flatboatman was indeed a "tough customer"; alternating between the severest manual labor and idleness, the relaxation as well as the gruelling struggle with the cordelle or the heavy sweeps tended to make these men as boisterous at play as they were hard-driven when at work. While the flatboats were going down-stream one man at the "gouger," or in the stern, could keep the boat in the current; but if the boat returned, both oar and the ropes attached to the shores were constantly strained to the breaking-point. When the hours of relaxation came, it is not strange that these men indulged in sport as strenuous and remarkable as

their toil had been severe. The one chief sport was fighting, and the bully of the Ohio Valley was King of the Valley in those old days.

The common expression of a boastful old-time Ohio River rowdy was that he was "half horse, half alligator"; they are referred to in an olden print as the "half-horse, half-alligator nuisance." A picture of one of these heroes—possibly an exaggerated picture—is preserved in *Cist's Miscellanies*:

As we were yesterday passing by the court-house, where an election was going on, a real "screamer from the Mob," about six feet four in height, sprang out of the crowd, and, rolling up his shirt-sleeves, commenced the following tirade:

"This is *me*, and no mistake! Billy Earthquake, Esquire, commonly called Little Billy, all the way from North Fork of Muddy Run! I'm a small specimen, as you see—a remote circumstance, a mere yearling; but cuss me, if I ain't of the true 'imported breed,' and can whip any man in this section of country! Whoop! Won't *nobody* come out and fight me? Come out some of you and die decently, for I am *spileing* for a fight! I han't had one for more than a week, and if you don't come out, I'm fly blowed before sun-down, to a *certingty*, so come up to tan! May be you don't know who Little Billy is? I'll tell you: I'm a poor man—it's a fact—and smell like a wet dog; but I can't be run over! I'm the identical individual that grinned a whole menagerie out of countenance, and made the ribbed nose baboon hang down his head and blush! W-h-o-o-p! I'm the chap, too, that towed the 'Broadhorn' up Salt River, where the snags were so thick that a fish couldn't swim without rubbing his scales off!—fact, and if anybody denies it, just let 'em make their will! Cock-a-doodle-doo! May be you never heard of the time the horse kicked me and put both his hips out of jint—if it ain't true, cut me up for catfish bait! W-H-O-O-P! I'm the very infant that refused his milk before its eyes were open, and called out for a bottle of old Rye! W-H-O-O-P! I'm that little Cupid! Talk to me about grinning the bark off a tree!—'tain't nothing; one squint





Bridging the Ohio.



of mine at a Bull's heel would blister it! Cock-a-doodle-doo! O I'm one of your toughest sort—live forever, and then turn to a white-oak post. Look at me," said he, slapping his hands on his thighs with the report of a pocket pistol, "I'm the *ginewine* article—a *real double acting engine*, and I can out-run, out-jump, out-swim, chaw more tobacco and spit less, and drink more whiskey and keep soberer than any other man in these localities! Cock-a-doodle-doo! Darn it," said Bill, walking off in disgust, "if that don't make 'em fight nothing will. I wish I may be kiln-dried, and split up into wooden shoe pegs, if I believe there is a chap among 'em that 's got courage enough to collar a hen. Well! I 'll go home and have another *settlement* with Jo Sykes. He 's a bad chance for a fight, it's true, seeing as how he 's but one eye left to gouge at, and an 'under' bit out of both ears; but poor fellow, he 's *willing to do his best*, and will stay a body's appetite till the next shooting match." Exit Little Billy, grumbling.

A fierce old-time fight of the "gouging" class happened to take place at Wheeling in April, 1806.

The quarrel [wrote a spectator] was confined to a Virginian by birth, and a Kentuckian by adoption. A ring was formed, and the mob demanded whether they proposed to *fight fair*, or to *rough and tumble*. The latter mode was preferred. . . . Bulk and bone were in favor of the Kentuckian; science and craft in that of the Virginian. The former promised himself victory from his power, the latter from his science. Very few rounds had taken place, or fatal blows given, before the Virginian contracted his whole form, drew up his arms to his face, with his hands nearly closed in a *concave*, by the fingers being bent to the full extension of the flexors; and summoning up all his energy for one act of desperation, pitched himself into the bosom of his opponent. Before the effects of this could be ascertained, the sky was rent by the shouts of the multitude; and I could learn that the Virginian had expressed as much *beauty* and *skill* in his retraction and bound, as if he had been bred in a menagerie, and practised action and attitude among panthers and wolves. The shock received by the Kentuckian, and the want of breath, brought him instantly to the ground.

The Virginian never lost his hold, like those bats of the South who never quit the subject on which they fasten till they taste blood, he kept his knees in his enemy's body; fixing his claws in his hair, and his thumbs on his eyes, gave them an instantaneous start from their sockets. The sufferer roared aloud, but uttered no complaint. The citizens again shouted with joy. Doubts were no longer entertained; and bets of three to one were offered on the Virginian. The Kentuckian not being able to disentangle his adversary from his face adopted a new mode of warfare; and, in imitation of the serpent which crushes such creatures to death as it proposes for its food, he extended his arms round the Virginian and hugged him into closer contact with his huge body. The latter disliking this, cast loose the hair and convex eyes of his adversary, when both, folded together like bears in an embrace, rolled several turns over each other. The acclamations increased, and bets run that the Kentuckian "*would give out,*" that is, after being mutilated and deprived of his eyes, ears, and nose, he would cry out for mercy and aid. The public were not precisely right. Some demon interposed for the biggest monster; he got his enemy under him, and in an instant snapt off his nose so close to his face that no manner of projection remained. The little Virginian made one further effort, and fastening on the under lip of his mutilator tore it over the chin. The Kentuckian at length *gave out*, on which the people carried off the victor, and he preferring a triumph to a doctor, who came to cicatrize his face, suffered himself to be chaired round the ground as the champion of the times, and the first *rough and tumbler*. The poor wretch whose eyes were started from their spheres, and whose lip refused its office, returned to the town to hide his impotence, and get his countenance repaired. . . . I asked a friend whether this kind of conduct spread down the river. I understood that it did on the left-hand side, and that I would do well to land there as little as possible. . . . I again demanded how a stranger was to distinguish a good from a vicious house of entertainment. I was answered, by previous inquiry, or, if that was impractical, a tolerable judgment could be formed, from observing in the landlord, a *possession*, or an absence of ears. . . .

The hero of this "half-horse, half-alligator" age was the renowned Mike Fink, whose shoulders were broad and strong enough to bear (as they ever will) the blame for a thousand irregularities committed by their owner as well as many committed by others. In attempting to compare Mike Fink and men of this ilk to the modern rivermen of the Steamboat Age one writer, Hiram Kaine, well says:

The steamboatman of the present day [1843] is no more like his keel-boat progenitor, than the hand on a fishing-boat is like a salt-water sailor. We will not undertake to say in whose favor this difference would operate. It is very possible that while much of the blunt sincerity and courage of former times has degenerated into ruffianism, society, at least along the rivers, has gained by the safety of its property from lawless pillage.

Mike Fink was born about 1780 in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and, as a lad, played a part in holding the Monongahela country against the redskins on the "Indian side." In Pittsburg his reputation as a hardy and brave bushwacker and ranger was the envy of his comrades. Thus it was in the rough school of Indian warfare that Mike Fink secured his preparation for life. Here, for instance, he acquired the marvellous accuracy with a musket which gave him a lasting reputation as the surest shot in the Ohio Valley. Possibly, too, it was this form of personal prowess that gave him the sobriquet by which he was known in that valley, the "Snapping Turtle"; on the Mississippi he was called "The Snag." It can easily be seen that either of these epithets might have come into existence because of Mike's love for, and accuracy with, his rifle. At any rate at the shooting-matches, which were one of the most common forms of social amusement, Mike was scratch man—indeed he frequently

was promised one fifth of the prize for not entering the contest.

The broad bosom of the Ohio offered a wide field of adventure for such a specimen of manhood, and Mike became King of the Valley, and what this meant may be inferred from an experience of Louis Phillipe of France in this region. While settling his score with a western landlord it is said the future king of France became involved in a dispute. Being unwilling to continue it Louis gave up the argument by saying that one destined to be king of France could not stoop to bandy words with a "common backwoodsman"; whereupon the party of the second part leaped over his counter and kicked the representative of royalty into the street with the observation:

"What if you are? we 're all kings over here."

Mike Fink was, therefore, a king among kings, and one to whom the farmers of the valley in which he plied his trade were eager to pay court, though this did not always excuse them from paying tribute; indeed it would seem that they did the latter in inverse ratio as they failed to do the former. Mike's nominal "trade" was to pilot keelboats and barges down the Ohio filled with produce, merchandise, or what-not for lower Ohio and Mississippi markets. His livelihood was made mostly by plundering the river farms of crop and stock; he was, in short, the Rob Roy of the western rivers. All good citizens stood in awe of his dare-devil pilferings, and constables and sheriffs were glad that he was a rover as it offered them an excuse for not attempting to challenge him and his crew. And while we are describing Fink it must be remembered we are describing the old bargemen in general, though

Fink was more than an ordinary type. Like the Harpes among the outlaws, so Fink among the barge-men stands head and shoulders above the others of his class.

It is commonly said that a man may be known by the treatment he accords his wife; and if one story of Fink is true the brutality of the man's nature stands fully revealed by it.

Several barges were descending the Ohio in the month of November, 1820; among others came that belonging to or operated by Mike Fink. It contained his wife and crew. The little flotilla tied up for the night just below the mouth of the Muskingum; and just as a landing was effected the noted boor went ashore and began kicking together a great pile of dry leaves. When this became nearly as high as his head he went on board his boat, got his rifle, and ordered his wife Peg in a fierce tone to follow him.

Both proceeded up the bank [continues the narrator of the story] to the pile of leaves, poor Peg in a terrible flutter, as she had discovered that Mike was in no very amiable mood.

"Get in there and lie down," was the command, tapped off with one of Mike's choicest oaths.

"Now Mr. Fink" (she always mistered him when his blood was up), "What have I done! I don't know, I'm sure——"

"Get in there and lie down, or I'll shoot you," with another oath, and drawing his rifle up to his shoulder. Poor Peg obeyed and crawled into the leaf pile, and Mike covered her up with the combustibles. He then took a flour barrel, and split the staves into fine pieces and lighted them at the fire on the boat, all the time watching the leaf pile, and swearing he would shoot Peg if she moved. So soon as his splinters began to blaze he took them into his hand and deliberately set fire, in four different places, to the leaves that surrounded his wife. In an instant, the whole mass was on fire, aided by a fresh wind,

which was blowing at the time, while Mike was quietly standing by enjoying the fun. Peg, through fear of Mike, stood it as long as she could; but it soon became too hot, and she made a run for the river, her hair and clothing all on fire. In a few seconds she reached the water, and plunged in, rejoiced to know she had escaped both fire and rifle so well.

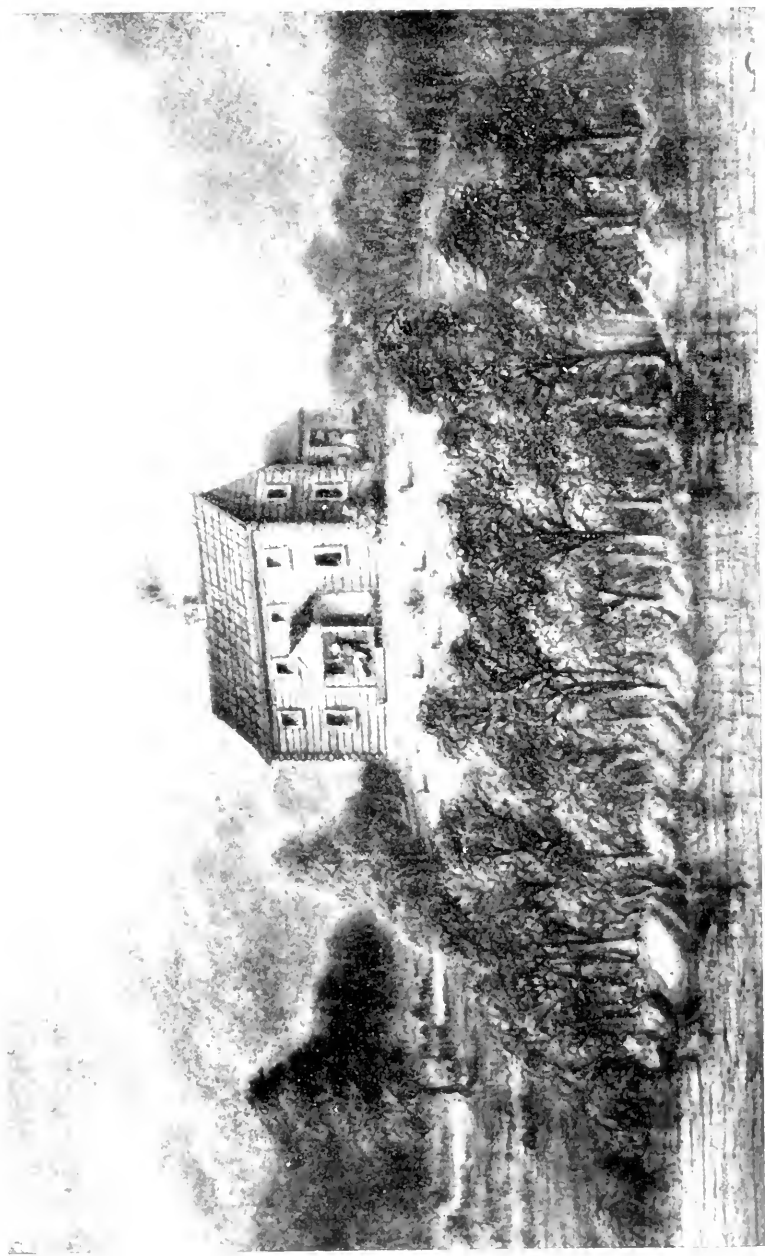
"There," said Mike, "that'll larn you to be winkin' at them fellers on the other boat."

In proof of Fink's marksmanship it has been averred that the court records at St. Louis actually show that Fink was compelled to answer to the charge of shooting off a "nigger's" heel. Fink, it is said, was on his boat (how far from shore is not stated) and the colored gentleman, who possessed one of the long heels peculiar to some African races, was on shore; the daredevil boatman with a single bullet removed the offending part. Mike's defence, according to a writer in the *Western Monthly Review* for July, 1829, was that "the fellow could n't wear a genteel boot and he wanted to fix it so that he could."

Yet it must not be supposed that Fink or any of his type were easily inveigled to a court-house. Of all Mike's escapades none show the rank audacity so commingled with a boorish strain of humor that was almost never lacking in his deportment so conspicuously as the famous occasion on which he attended court at Louisville. The story is well told in Ben Cassaday's *History of Louisville* as follows:

In all his little tricks, as Mike called them, he never displayed any very accurate respect to the laws either of propriety or property, but he was so ingenious in his predations that it is impossible not to laugh at his crimes. The stern vigor of Justice, however, did not feel disposed to laugh at Mike, but on the contrary offered a reward for his capture. For a long time Mike fought shy and could not be taken, until an old friend of





Residence of George Rogers Clark on the Indiana Shore, opposite Louisville.  
From an India-ink sketch by Voustamp.



his, who happened to be a constable, came to his boat when she was moored at Louisville and represented to Mike the poverty of his family; and, presuming on Mike's known kindness of disposition, urged him to allow himself to be taken, and so procure for his friend the promised reward. He showed Mike the many chances of escape from conviction, and withal plead so strongly that Mike's kind heart at last overcame him and he consented—but upon one condition! He felt at home nowhere but in his boat and among his men: let them take him and his men in the yawl and they will go.

It was the only hope of procuring his appearance at court and the constable consented. Accordingly a long-coupled wagon was procured, and with oxen attached it went down the hill at Third Street for Mike's yawl. The road, for it was not then a street, was very steep and very muddy at this point. Regardless of this, however, the boat was set upon the wagon, and Mike and his men, with their long poles ready, as if for an aquatic excursion, were put aboard, Mike in the stern. By dint of laborious dragging the wagon had attained half the height of the hill, when out shouted the stentorian voice of Mike calling to his men—*Set Poles!* and the end of every long pole was set firmly in the thick mud—*Back Her!* roared Mike, and down the hill again went wagon, yawl, men, and oxen. Mike had been revolving the matter in his mind and had concluded that it was best not to go; and well knowing that each of his men was equal to a moderately strong ox, he had at once conceived and executed this retrograde movement. Once at the bottom, another parley was held and Mike was again overpowered. This time they had almost reached the top of the hill, when *Set Poles—Back Her* was again ordered and executed. A third attempt, however, was successful and Mike reached the court-house in safety; and as his friend, the constable, had endeavored to induce him to believe, he was acquitted for lack of sufficient evidence. Other indictments, however, were found against him, but Mike preferred not to wait to hear them tried; so, at a given signal, he and his men boarded their craft again and stood ready to weigh anchor. The dread of the long poles in the hands of Mike's men prevented the *posse* from urging any serious remonstrance against his departure.

And off they started with poles "tossed." As they left the court-house yard Mike waved his red bandanna, which he had fixed on one of the poles, and promising to "*call again*" was bourne back to his element and launched once more upon the waters.

Fink was not great in stature, lacking several inches of the six-foot mark; his face was broad and round and his features were not unpleasant. His skin was browned deep by the sun and the winds; his eyes were blue, inclining to gray, and very expressive. He constantly saw the ridiculous side of things, as our anecdotes abundantly prove. What he lacked of the Hercules model in height he made up in brawn, for his muscles were bands of tempered steel. So goes his description among his biographers; of himself he only said, modestly, "I can out-run, out-hop, out-jump, throw down, drag out, and lick any man in the country. I'm a Saltriver roarer; I love the wimming and I'm chock full of fight." What "Peg" thought of the next to the last declaration is not recorded, but no one can fail to imagine "Little Billy's" delight if ever his star brought him face to face with Mike Fink.

Such were the outlaws and rowdies, judged by their legendary heroes, of the Ohio Valley; they were not the only men in the valley and far from the best; but they were continually heard from and as specimens of a civilization *in transitu* must forever be remembered. In all the wonderful awakening of the West nothing is more interesting than to note the change of social tones. The rough black day of the ranger and hunter was succeeded by a brighter era, and it was a vast advance on earlier conditions when Harpe's head was hung at the cross-roads; and, for

all the hollow mockery of it, it was an epoch-making event for Mike Fink's face to be seen in a court of justice.

Among the notorious citizens of the early West none were more widely known than "The Hunters of Kentucky," a name that became current after the battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, when the Kentucky troops gained brilliant laurels. The name was coined by Samuel Woodworth, the author of *The Old Oaken Bucket*, who celebrated the Kentuckians in a stirring poem. The verses fell into the hands of an actor, N. M. Ludlow, who, in 1822, was playing under the management of James H. Caldwell in the old French Theatre on Orleans Street, New Orleans. The actor's brother found the lines in the New York *Mirror* and sent them to him; pleased by them he fashioned them to the music of Risk's song of Miss Baily, *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*. He planned to sing it first on his own benefit night.

When the night came [he left record <sup>1</sup>] I found the pit, or parquette, of the theatre full of rivermen—that is, keelboat and flatboat men. There were very few steamboatmen. These men were easily known by their linsey-woolsey clothing and blanket coats. As soon as the comedy of the night was over I dressed myself in a buckskin hunting shirt and leggings, which I had borrowed of a riverman, and with moccasins on my feet and an old slouch hat on my head and a rifle on my shoulder, I presented myself before the audience. I was saluted with loud applause of hands and feet, and a prolonged whoop, or howl, such as Indians give when they are especially pleased. I sang the first verse, and these manifestations of delight were louder and longer than before. As I delivered the last five words of the fourth verse I took my old hat off, threw it on the ground, and brought my rifle to the position of taking aim. At

<sup>1</sup> *Dramatic Life as I Found it.*

that instant came a shout and an Indian yell from the inmates of the pit, and a tremendous applause from the other portions of the house, the whole lasting for nearly a minute and . . . the house "rose to meet me."

The song ran:

Ye gentlemen and ladies fair,  
 Who grace this famous city,  
 Just listen, if you 've time to spare,  
 While I rehearse a ditty;  
 And for this opportunity  
 Conceive yourself quite lucky,  
 For 't is but seldom that you see  
 A hunter from Kentucky.

*Chorus*

Oh, Kentucky! The hunters of Kentucky!

We are a hardy, freeborn race,  
 Each man to fear a stranger;  
 Whate'er the game, we join in chase,  
 Despising toil and danger;  
 And if a daring foe annoys,  
 No matter what his force is,  
 We'll show him that Kentucky boys  
 Are Alligator-horses.

You 've heard the town of New Orleans  
 Was famed for wealth and beauty;  
 They 've girls of every hue, it seems,  
 From snowy white to sooty—  
 So Pakenham, he made his brags,  
 If he in fight was lucky,  
 He 'd have our girls and cotton bags,  
 In spite of old Kentucky.

But Jackson he was wide awake,  
 And was n't scared at trifles,  
 For well he knew what aim we take  
 With our Kentucky rifles;

He led us down to Cypress Swamp—  
 The ground was low and mucky—  
 There stood John Bull in martial pomp,  
 And here was old Kentucky.

A bank was raised to hide our breast,  
 Not that we thought of dying,  
 But that we always liked to rest,  
 Unless the game was flying.  
 Behind it stood our little force,  
 None wished it to be greater,  
 For every man was half a horse  
 And half an alligator.

They did not let our patience tire,  
 For soon they showed their faces;  
 We thought we would reserve our fire,  
 So snugly held our places,  
 And when so near we saw them wink,  
 We thought it time to stop 'em,  
 And 't would have done you good, I think,  
 To see Kentuckians drop 'em.

They found at last 't was vain to fight  
 Where lead was all the booty,  
 And so they wisely took to flight,  
 And left us all the beauty.  
 And now, if danger e'er annoys,  
 You all know what our trade is;  
 Just send for us Kentucky boys,  
 And we 'll protect the ladies.

All manners of severe personal contact were devised for the delectation of the "alligator-horse" as well as for his pugnacious brother on shore. The notion has become common that it was the riverman, exclusively, who made the Ohio River famous for the fighting and gouging which horrified so many quiet travellers in the West. This idea is wholly untrue;

the land lubber fought with equal relish and to as many different tunes as his friend afloat. On land, as on the river, a free fight was the frolic which ensued after a period of hard work whenever some common cause brought a company together. Road building was often such a cause and in one instance resulted in a most novel fight—at least to the eyes of an orderly Methodist clergyman who was present and left record of it as follows:

Shortly after we had taken up our residence in Trimble County, Kentucky, I was called upon [writes Rev. Mr. Young] to assist in opening a road from the place where Newcastle now stands, to the mouth of Kentucky River on the Ohio. . . .

I met the company early in the morning, with my ax, three days' provisions, and my knapsack. Here I found a Captain, with about one hundred men, all prepared to labor; about as jovial a company as I ever saw, all good-natured and civil. This was about the last of November, 1797. . . . The company worked hard all day, in quiet, and every man obeyed the captain's orders punctually. . . . We warmed our cold victuals, ate our suppers, and spent the evening in hearing the hunters' stories relative to the bloody scenes of the Indian War. We then heard some pretty fine singing, considering the circumstances. Thus far, well; but a change began to take place. They became very rude, and raised the war-whoop. Their shrill shrieks made me tremble. They chose two captains, divided the men into two companies, and commenced fighting with the fire-brands—the log-heaps having burned down. The only law for their government was, that no man should throw a brand without fire on it—so that they might know how to dodge. They fought, for two or three hours, in perfect good nature; till brands became scarce, and they began to violate the law. Some were severely wounded, blood began to flow freely, and they were in a fair way of commencing a fight in earnest. At this moment, the loud voice of the captain rang out above the din, ordering every man to retire to rest. They dropped their weapons of warfare, rekindled the fires, and lay





A Case where the Burden of Proof Lies with the Affirmative.



down to sleep. We finished our road according to directions, and returned home in health and peace.

A moderate volume would hardly contain the many tales that have come down to us of the fierce forms of enjoyment indulged in by the earliest Ohio River rowdies. Let us notice a few specimens. One night a flatboatman came to anchor at Louisville and went out with his comrades looking for trouble, in other words, on pleasure bent. Back of the town, it was soon discovered, a darkey corn-shucking was in full swing. Here, too, a contest was the order of the evening, evidently on the theory that some sort of a fight must be going on if general enjoyment was to prevail; the corn was equally divided between the two parties into which the company was divided. Each side chose a captain who was to lead in the fray, and rails were laid across the corn pile to make the division line clear. Then both sides set to work to do their quota before the other.

Taking in the situation at a glance the river rowdies went back to the shore of the Ohio and filled the wallets of their hunting-shirts with stones and returned stealthily to the scene of merry-making. Dividing into two groups they took their stand in the rear of the two bands of contestants, and now and then would "plug" a darkey on the opposite side with a stone. The missile sped unseen but the effect was as instantaneous as it was cruel. Each darkey supposed, of course, that he had been hit by a rival husker and as the evening wore on and both sides had been about equally abused and blood was trickling from a dozen sore heads, merri-ment gave way to threats and threats in turn to angry encounters. And all the while the rowdies in the

background were writhing with suppressed mirth at the ludicrous spectacle presented. They were of course unsatisfied until the evening's merriment had been utterly destroyed and a riot "of the largest size" had been precipitated.

Duels were common throughout the reign of the rowdy in this valley; one of these, a duel with rocks, is recorded by Governor Reynolds, of Illinois, as one of the unique forms of brutality of a brutal age. It was fought in the mining district of Illinois, between one Thomas Higgins and an unknown champion.

The same size and number of rocks [writes Reynolds] were selected by their seconds, and the parties placed at their posts, ten yards apart. The combatants were to throw the rocks at each other at the time mentioned by the seconds. The rocks were placed in a pile, so that the parties could use them as they pleased. Higgins was so strong, courageous, and expert in throwing rocks that his opponent was forced to flee to save his life. This was a kind *medium* duel between the murderous pistol and the brutal pugilation, but still highly condemnable by refined civilization and Christianity.

Governor Reynold's memoirs of early life in Illinois preserve many interesting stories of the pranks and tricks of pioneer days.

It entered then [he writes] into the hearts of the people to enjoy these pranks with more pleasure than the money-making people do of the present day. An individual [William Lemen] now a resident of Monroe County, only a few miles distant from the place where he was born, of an excellent and respectable family, and he himself a man of rare and good talents of this order, has performed, with ingenuity and adroitness, more tricks and pranks than would fill a volume. In his neighborhood, at the house of Andrew Kinney, was a night-meeting, and the congregation were zealous and devout. This religious

meeting was held in a small log-cabin, with only one window. When the congregation were all down on their knees devoutly in prayer, and their heads bowed down, this singular and talented individual, Lemen, threw a small calf through the window into the house. The calf was kept in a pen behind the house, and when it was thrown in through the window, it knocked the only candle down, which was burning on the table under the window. The calf bawled out in the darkness in the midst of the congregation. The females screamed out, and were terrified nearly to death, as they supposed the "Old Boy" had jumped in through the window to seize them for their sins. After much confusion and shouting, the candle was again lit, and behold, there stood the calf. In pioneer-times in Illinois, the people were not so ambitious to acquire wealth as they are at this day, and enjoyed themselves more in such amusements [!] as above narrated. . . .

Intoxicants were responsible for a great proportion of the rowdyism in the Ohio Valley as has been true everywhere; among the boatmen drinking was very common and the results were marked and remarked. Nor were rivermen alone given to much imbibing; the westerner was proverbially thirsty. The story goes that the thirst of a western editor gave rise to the expression common in Massachusetts—"Booked for Greenfield." The editor was stopping at the stage-house in Northampton and

after a reasonable time he became dry, and called for a glass of brandy. "No," says the landlord, "we have no license to sell spirits—we don't keep the article." The editor visited the other public houses—looked into the groceries and cellars, made close inquiries but found them tetotallers. He returned to the stage-house with a long face—"Landlord," says he, "tell me the nearest place where I can get a glass of brandy, for I'm too dry to stay here any longer." "I guess you can get it at Greenfield, for they grant licenses there, and it is said they sell spirits." "How far is it?" "Twenty miles." "What

time does the stage start?" "Twelve o'clock at night." "Well, say, Landlord, book me for Greenfield."

Dr. Aldrich's five reasons for drinking whiskey were unanimously adopted by Ohio rivermen:

*Whiskey*, a friend, or being dry,  
Or, lest we should be, by and by,  
Or, any other reason why.

Yet who could not find five, or any mutiple of five, reasons for imbibing when the beverages bore such enchanting names as "Clay and Huysen," "Polk and Dallas," "Race Horse," "Ching Ching," "Tog," "Rappee," "Tip and Ty," "Fiscal Agent," "T. O. U.," "Tippena Pecco," "Moral Suasion," "Vox Populi," "Ne Plus Ultra," "Shambro," "Pig and Whistle," "Silver Top," "Poor Man's Punco," "Split Ticket," "Deacon," "Exchange," "Stone Wall," "Virginia Fence," "Floater," and "Shifter"? The chief devotees of these "fancy drinks"—the tavern loafers—were the boors and rowdies of most western towns, every whit as unmannerly as those routed out of their comfortable seats by the fire by Benjamin Franklin, who, in a loud voice, ordered a peck of oysters for his horse; the monopolizers of the fire-place wandered away to witness the novel sight of a horse eating oysters, while the Doctor chose a good chair and began roasting his oysters. It is said that a similar ruse was employed in a western grocery store—whether on the Ohio River it is not stated—by a recruiting captain. The stove was completely surrounded by loafers who thought not of moving to make room for the newcomer. The captain knew the place, and going behind the counter he returned with a keg marked "powder." Opening the

stove door he said, "Gentlemen, it's my opinion that we've lived long enough," and threw in the keg. There was no lack of room near the stove immediately after and the captain was free to choose his seat.

The old-time passion of politics often took the form of pranks that were sometimes the high-water mark of rowdyism. The axle of Van Buren's coach was sawed to the breaking-point while travelling on the Cumberland Road; it broke at the first hill, and the man who had vetoed a Cumberland Road bill secured some first-hand information concerning the road's condition before he reached the next town on foot. General Jackson, whose famous veto of the Maysville Road bill marked the turning-point in our history of internal improvements, had occasion to journey over the Maysville Pike. Boys altered the signs on the guide-post and the General enjoyed a pleasant ride—to Mount Sterling.

## Chapter X

### From Keelboat to Schooner

A SLIGHT description of the craft sailed by the fighting Virginians on the Ohio has been given, but what pen can describe adequately the vast pageant enacted on that river in the years of the great emigration as thousands of canoes, pirogues, skiffs, dugouts, galleys, arks, keelboats, flatboats, "broadhorns," "sneak boxes," and rafts bore westward their marvellous cargoes? A nation's hope floated westward on the Ohio; for it must be admitted on every hand that if America could not expand—if the great West was forever to float alien flags—the flag that floated along the seaboard was to live forever in peril. The Virginians had conquered the West, but the truer conquerors came in canoe and pirogue, in the keelboat and "broadhorn." The bugler's horn had sounded "advance" and "retreat" along all the rivers of the West wherever Clark and Bowman, Lewis and Crawford, St. Clair, Harmar, and Wayne had led their soldiers. Here, too, the bugles of England and France and Spain had echoed all in vain; but now came another horn and its mellow music ringing clear along those self-same rivers told of another and a greater conquest. And this was the boatman's horn; where it sounded cabins and clearings appeared, hearthstones glowed, and a new nation arose.





The *Sprague*, the Largest Ohio River Towboat.

1880  
JAN 14 1881  
JAN 14 1881

The growth of this nation is to be noticed in the evolution of the vehicles which bore its freight and commerce. This was true on land and on the water. But the change in craft was more rapid than the change in vehicles, a fact explained by the earlier application of steam on water than on land. The Indian pony and the white man's packhorse carried the first packs of peltry and merchandise on the narrow frontier trails; on the streams the lithe canoes were the burden-bearers, though capable of carrying far greater loads than the floundering pony. These canoes differed not greatly from the similar craft of our own day though it is only in the far North that one may see the counterpart of such craft as bore Céloron's leaden plates and glittering soldiery down the Allegheny and Ohio a century and a half ago. Ranging from diminutive size to ponderous boats seventy and eighty feet in length, the bark canoe sped swiftly, driven by one or twenty paddles, as the case might be, up and down the Ohio and its tributaries. To find a proper tree, to strip it of its covering, to fashion this deftly to the desired shape, to patch and caulk and pitch, is a lost art the early woodsman learned of his red-skinned tutor. It is surprising in how short a space of time—a day and less—such a boat could be fashioned and launched. They were frail, easily torn by the rocks at the "riffles," and pierced instantly by the myriad snags and "planters" that filled the rivers. However they often lasted several seasons, for the Indians buried canoes in the sand over winter and dug them out in the spring.

Yet if the real truth were known it would doubtless appear that there has been great exaggeration in the

matter of the trade of the ancient canoes both on river and lake, with the exception of that on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence in the North. For special expeditions of warring and trading parties great canoes were made and used for temporary ends; but for many months the Ohio was gorged with ice and bursting with flood-tides; in midsummer it ran dry here, and dangerously low there, and on many days the "River of Many White Caps" was unnavigable for these light craft. In the face of all this there is no question that land routes, rough and narrow as they were, were more sought than has been believed, and the river courses proportionately less.

The canoe plied up and down all streams and was immediately succeeded by the long, narrow keelboat, which also plied up and down the rivers carrying loads as great or greater than any canoe. This craft was made of strong planks and boards and therefore did not appear on the Ohio in great numbers until saw-mills on the Allegheny and Monongahela were built. These came shortly after the close of the Revolution. The average keelboat was about twelve feet in width and thirty feet in length. The body of the boat was covered, protecting the cargo from rain, and from fifteen to forty tons of freight could be carried in these protected holds. On either side of the boat were narrow platforms called "running-boards." The keelboat crew numbered anywhere from six to eighteen men, commanded by a captain. Advancing to the prow the crew, being divided equally on either side, "set" their long sharply shod "poles" on the bottom of the river or any projection that offered, and, pushing the pole with shoulders placed in the "socket," walked

slowly from prow to stern. Thus the heavy boat was propelled its own length. At the cry of "lift" they returned to the prow and repeated the operation in unison at the command "set." Where the river's current was swift only one man on a side could "lift"; hurrying by his fellows to the prow again he "set" his pole and in passing to the stern kept well to the edge of the running-board to make room for the next in turn to pass him. The slightest error in swift rapids might result in great disaster if the current should swing the boat broadside upon the encroaching rocks. A boatman who could not say that he had never allowed his boat to "swing," or that he had never been compelled to backwater in a "chute," lost caste among his fellows. In the larger and deeper streams it was necessary for the keelboats to hug the shores where the water was shallow or where the bushes could be seized or projecting logs on shore could be made use of. This was called "bushwacking" among keelboatmen. In ascending large streams this matter of holding to the shores was of prime importance.

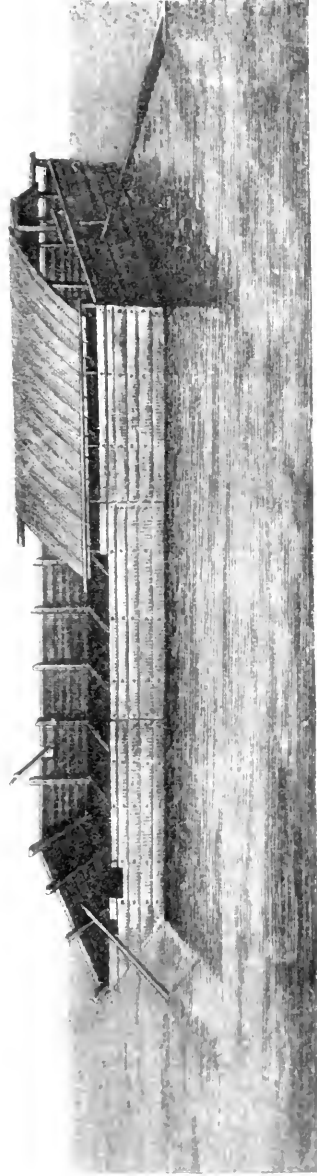
The canoe and keelboat were both up and down river craft—an important similarity. The keelboat of moderate dimensions and draught could ascend practically all of the important tributaries of the Ohio, and in earliest times became of greatest value in carrying salt from the licks and kilns to the early settlements. The cry of the keelboat captains rang out through the little valleys of the West in the day when their crafts were the only means of water commerce between the interior and the Ohio River settlements. Carrying out our comparison a step further the keels were to the riverways what the first clumsy carts were on the land

routes; these carried, back and forth, greater loads than the packhorses, and the keelboats, in turn, carried greater loads than the old canoes and with better protection.

The first line of packet boats in the ordinary sense were galley keelboats that plied between Cincinnati and Pittsburg from November, 1793, onward. This line was established by one Jacob Myers, who was "influenced by a love of philanthropy and desire of being serviceable to the public." Yet it was not a business to be engaged in merely for one's "health," as the following sentence from the proprietor's advertisement makes clear:

No danger need be apprehended from the enemy, as every person on board will be under cover, made proof against rifle or musquet balls, and port holes for firing out of. Each boat is armed with six pieces carrying a pound ball; also a number of good muskets, and amply supplied with ammunition, strongly manned with choice hands, and the masters of approved knowledge. A separate cabin is partitioned off for accommodating ladies on their passage; conveniences are constructed so as to render landing unnecessary, as it might, at times, be attended with danger. Rules and regulations for maintaining order and for the good management of the boats, and tables of the rates of freightage, passage, and carrying of letters; also, of the exact time of arrival and departure at all way places, may be seen on the boat and at the printing office in Cincinnati. Passengers supplied with provisions and liquors, of first quality, at most reasonable rates possible. Persons may work their passage. An office for insuring at moderate rates the property carried, will be kept at Cincinnati, Limestone [Maysville, Ky.], and Pittsburg.

In the pools these boats were, no doubt, propelled by oars; on the bars and riffles the poles were used; the boat was, therefore, a combination keel- and galley-



Emigrant Boat in which the Pioneers Went from Pittsburg to Kentucky.  
From an old print.

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, located in the center of the page.



boat. The keel was the important distinction. Throughout the era of military conquest the keelboat played its part, hewed timbers going into its make-up. *The Willing* a so-called "galley-batteau" which played a part in Clark's conquest of Vincennes, was this type of a boat, as were the keelboats used by Captain Henry Bird in his invasion of Kentucky in 1780. The first early trading was, of course, done in the keelboats. The first trading voyage past the "Falls of the Ohio" (Louisville) is said to have been that of Colonel Richard Taylor and Hancock Taylor, in 1769, to the Yazoo River. The next was that of Captain William Linn and George Gibson to New Orleans for military stores. Captain Rogers, remembered for his savage battle on the Ohio, had been returning with keelboats from the South. In 1782-83 Messrs. Tardiveau and Honore left Brownsville, Pa., beginning a keelboat trade to New Orleans, which they transferred later to Louisville and extended later to the Spanish and French settlements of the Mississippi and Illinois.

But the broad-axe and the saw-mill gave more to the world than the keelboat, for in a moment the flood-tides of pioneers descended on the upper Ohio, and every craft known to mankind, save only the steamboat, was soon drifting with the river's tides south and west. The distinction of the flatboat and the brig, which now appeared, from the craft which had preceded them lay in the significant fact that these later boats were, as a class, down-river boats only—they journeyed but one way; these were the home-seeker's boats and they never returned. Barges and flatboats were built during Revolutionary times, but as the roads that were built across the Alleghenies for armies became

overgrown and impassable for travellers in two or three years' time because unused, so the first barges and flats were allowed to rot and sink as there were none to use them. It is impossible (as well as contrary to the spirit of the time) to attempt to lay any hard and fast chronological order for the appearance of the first important craft on western waters; necessity was the only law that reigned and men went and came the best they could. But it is safe to lay down the general principle that the keelboat—after the canoe and “dug-out”—was the first boat to ply the Ohio, and that the barge and flatboat came with the rush of the pioneers over the mountains. As a class these boats went down but never came back. The exception to this will be noted later.

Such was the great variation in the styles of flatboat and barge that it is possible to say that the only similarity was in the flat bottom which all such boats possessed. Probably every known mathematical figure found its counterpart in this numberless flotilla of flatboats that descended the Ohio in the last two decades of the older century and the first two decades of the nineteenth. Flatboats were really but a step in advance of the old-time raft—a raft for instance such as Washington and Gist hewed on the bleak shores of the Allegheny on the return from the French fort near Lake Erie in 1752; in earliest days such crafts were the common freight “boats” of the West. The flatboat best known to the pioneers was merely a rectangular raft with sides two or three feet high. The poorer sort of “flat” had no covering, but a sort of a shed at the rear offered protection to the emigrant's cattle and horses while a little cabin up forward housed himself and

family. Tents and awnings often did service as shelter for both men and beasts. The more substantial—and more costly—flats had strong bulwarks and were wholly or partly covered.

The amount of covered space seems to have varied with the destination of each boat; those destined for Kentucky ports were half-covered and known as "Kentucky boats." Those intended for Mississippi ports were often wholly roofed over and known as "New Orleans boats." But these were of a later day. The square-toed pioneer flatboat was only partially covered, but every inch of sawed timber in it was of great value down the river where saw-mills were few and far between. Usually the flatboat, built in one of the busy boat-yards on the Monongahela such as those at Brownsville, Elizabeth, or Morganstown, became worth its weight in salt in the low country. Thousands of pioneer cabins in the Ohio Valley were made from the timbers of the flatboats of their owners. The best of these made fine cabins with little change. It is averred that the first schoolhouse in Cincinnati was made out of a flatboat; and it is sure the first newspaper printed in Kentucky was "set up" in a flatboat descending the Ohio to Limestone (Maysville). The "gunnels" of more than one solid flatboat were used in infant Cincinnati as the foundations for houses; and as we note elsewhere was true in Louisville, so at many points early stores were in moored flatboats. And so, architecturally, the ancient "flat" varied, for instance, as much as the Ohio River house-boats do to-day from comfortable and well-finished cabins to the merest hulks that will float.

A full-rigged flatboat of the better class was pro-

vided with four oars by which it was kept in the current of the river or rowed ashore. The oars on either side were "sweeps"; a long oar at the stern served as a rudder, and a shorter oar in front, known as the "gouger," also served as a steering oar; both of these oars helped to keep the "flat" in the current, which was the usual means of locomotion, though sails were used to some extent, as well as the poles of keelboatmen. The difficulties of navigation centred in the logs and reefs in the river and the bars at the riffles. Often the flatboat had to be "warped" over the sand-bars; this consisted of attaching a hawser to a stump or tree on shore and winding it up on a reel or wheel on board, an operation not unlike "cordelling" of later days.

The history of one of the early flatboat yards, that at Elizabeth, Pa., has been carefully preserved and it contains points of genuine interest.<sup>1</sup> An advertisement of this yard in the *Pennsylvania Journal* of Philadelphia, February 13, 1788, reads:

Boats of every dimension may be had at Elizabeth-Town, in the course of next spring and summer, at as short notice, and on as reasonable terms as at any place on said river. The situation of the town is attended with this singular advantage, that there is water sufficient for boats to go down from it into the Ohio at any season of the year. It possesses likewise another advantage from its being surrounded by a rich and thick settled country, where provisions of all kinds may be had at a very cheap rate, particularly flour, there being no less than six grist mills within the circumference of three or four miles.

In the same newspaper of August 20, 1788, appears the following advertisement:

#### BOATS FOR SALE.

At Elizabeth, Town on the Monongahela, may now be had. Kentucky Boats of different dimensions; where also for the

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth *Herald*, Boat Building Centennial Edition, June 7, 1900.

future, Boats of every construction and size may be had, at as low price as any on these waters; To prevent the detention of travellers, so frequent on the river for want of boats, the proprietor has erected a Boat Yard on the premises, where timber is plenty, and four of the best Boat Builders from Philadelphia are constantly employed.

The town is situated on the east side of the Monongahela, between Red Stone Old Fort [Brownsville, Pa.] and Pittsburg, about an equal distance from each, and is six miles above the mouth of the Yough: the place where it stands was formerly called the New-Store. The rout to it from Bedford, is by Bonnet's tavern, from thence the Glade Road to Cherry's mill, to Budd's ferry on Yough, thence to Captain Peterson's and from thence a good road to Elizabeth Town, where travellers may be accommodated with houses to deposit their goods in, and be supplied with provisions of every kind at a reasonable price. Another singular advantage attending this place is, that boats are never detained for want of water, having always enough to go into the Ohio, which is but twenty miles distant.

Those who would wish to be supplied as above may know the terms by applying to

STEPHEN BAYARD, Proprietor, On the Premises.

It is impossible to guess when the first flatboat containing an *émigré's* family passed down the Ohio, but if the truth were known it was probably not long after Mary Ingles and her Dutch woman fled homeward from their Shawanese captors. The date of the first trip of a flatboat engaged in trade is fairly well authenticated; for the flatboat was also the boat which supplied all the early river settlements with the manufactures and products of the "Monongahela country." It was called "the lower trade" and hundreds of enterprising men bought a "flat" and a "stock" and set afloat to seek their fortunes. Captain Jacob Yoder is said to have taken the first flatboat to New Orleans in 1782. The late Captain Joseph Pierce of Cincin-

nati erected over Yoder's grave the first iron tablet cast west of the Alleghenies and it contained this inscription:

Jacob Yoder was born at Reading, Pennsylvania, August 11, 1758; and was a soldier of the Revolutionary army in 1777 and 1778. He emigrated to the West in 1780; and in May, 1782, from Fort Redstone, Brownsville, Pa., on the Monongahela river, in the *First Flat Boat* that ever descended the Mississippi river, he landed in New Orleans, with a cargo of produce. He died April 7, 1832, at his farm in Spencer County, Kentucky, and lies here interred beneath this tablet.

The staple article of sale along the river that never failed of a market, seemingly, was liquor. This, of course, agrees with the common legend of the widespread habit of drinking in early days, and it is not out of order to say here that there was more or less reason in this practice. The first white men in the West were subject to the same physical conditions as the red man. Living in the continual damp and shade of the primeval forest, sleeping in part on the ground or near it, exposed to rain and cold as no succeeding generation has been exposed, the western pioneer became remarkably phlegmatic; the blood was cold and slow and the animal spirits consequently in an habitual state of depression bordering on melancholy. The influence of strong drink on these men, as on the savages who craved it so eagerly, was acceptable and exceedingly exhilarating.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. David McClure in his *Diary* states: "An aged physician of my acquaintance, who lived in Connecticut, and died many years ago, in younger life, went with a party of Indian hunters, far northward on a hunting expedition, and fared in all respects, in the excursion, as the Indians; on his return home he felt an unsatiable thirst for rum, and drank such a quantity as would at another time have laid him by, yet without any unfavorable effects. The old gentleman used to relate the adventure, and add that he could never blame an Indian for loving rum." (pp. 70, 71.)



At the Mouth of the Great Kanawha River.





Of one flatboatman, Benjamin F. Beazell, we read: "For himself he built a trade boat—loaded it with a variety of goods as flour, cherry bounce and boiled cider. For the latter he paid three dollars per barrel and sold it for five dollars making a nice profit. He sold his whole cargo on the way and at Cincinnati, and walked home to Brownsville, Pa., carrying the proceeds." A letter of an old flatboat merchant, John Bower, to his wife living at Fredericktown, Pa., lies before me postmarked at Gallipolis, Ohio, December 20, 1818. Its humorous note gives an added interest to the general picture of actual experience which it graphically draws:

Flat Boat in the mouth of Big Kenaway Point Pleasant 300 Miles Below Pittsburg Sunday Dec. 20 1818.

I expect your waters [rivers] are closed with ice you will wonder how it is with us—I will therefore inform you that we are here Blocked up untill the weather Changes—we are however in good health and have sold some whiskey & expect to sell more as there was no whiskey on this river before we landed ours but this river (Kenaway) is frozen over in twenty-four hours from the time it began to freeze. the Ohio runs thick with ice so that we know not how long we shall stay here.

I think Jonas will have a second time to go down this river Before he learns every manouvre of Boating—that is Before he learns not to scratch the Shore fifteen or twenty miles before he can get the boat Stopped and then to run night and day in the most eminent danger and the weather most excessive Cold—when the Boats will run above 100 miles in 24 hours and the nights so dark that the Shores Cannot be known from the water any other way than by throwing Stone or Coal out from the sides and hearing where they light—when his rest cannot exceed 4 hours out of 24, and all the rest be watching and fatigue—when running on an Island how to Carry his boat in the river again—when thrown on land by the ice his oars run in the earth almost to the handle how to get her afloat again and how to

run into a harbour for Safety and live in the boat when it is cold enough to freeze a dog to death—such with but few exceptions has been our Case since we embarked.

We left Pusey's large Boat on the Point of Marietta Island—stopped twenty four hours to help them off but in vain—took in about 95 barrels of their loading Coffing took in about 20—Wm. Pusey left hands to take care of his boat and is gone on in the ice with Coffing's boat—the ice being too heavy we thought it prudent to lay bye this freight and a great part of our whiskey lays on Shore we intend unloading every barrel and I expect shall have difficulty to Save our boat when the river breaks up.

Though few in number there were a score of covered boats, of about one hundred tons each, more properly known as barges, that both descended and ascended the Ohio River; their cargo down-stream was practically the same as that of the trading flatboat and their cargo up-stream was merchandise from New Orleans. In the difficult task of driving these heavy boats against the Mississippi and Ohio tides every power known was employed, oars, poles, sails, and the tow-line. No less a pen than that of the naturalist Audubon has left us an exact description of this difficult feat:

We shall suppose one of these boats under way, and, having passed Natchez, entering upon what were called the difficulties of their ascent. Wherever a point projected so as to render the course or bend below it of some magnitude, there was an eddy, the returning current of which was sometimes as strong as that of the middle of the great stream. The bargemen, therefore, rowed up pretty close under the bank, and had merely to keep watch in the bow lest the boat should run against a planter or sawyer. But the boat has reached the point, and there the current is to all appearance of double strength and right against it. The men, who have rested a few minutes, are ordered to take their stations and lay hold of their oars, for the river must be crossed, it being seldom possible to double such a point and proceed along the same shore. The boat is crossing, its head



Marietta, Ohio, from Harmar Hill.



slanting to the current, which is, however, too strong for the rowers, and when the other side of the river has been reached, it has drifted perhaps a quarter of a mile. The men are by this time exhausted, and, as we shall suppose it to be 12 o'clock, fasten the boat to a tree on the shore. A small glass of whiskey is given to each, when they cook and eat their dinner, and after resting from their fatigue for an hour, recommence their labors. The boat is again seen slowly advancing against the stream. It has reached the lower end of a sandbar, along the edge of which it is propelled by means of long poles, if the bottom be hard. Two men, called bowsmen, remain at the prow to assist, in concert with the steersman, in managing the boat and keeping its head right against the current. The rest place themselves on the land side of the footway of the vessel, put one end of their poles on the ground and the other against their shoulders and push them with all their might. As each of the men reaches the stern, he crosses to the other side, runs along it, and comes again to the landward side of the bow, when he recommences operations. The barge in the meantime is ascending at a rate not exceeding one mile in the hour.

The bar is at length passed, and as the shore in sight is straight on both sides and the current uniformly strong, the poles are laid aside, and the men being equally divided, those on the river side take to their oars, while those on the land side lay hold of the branches of willows or other trees, and thus slowly propel the boat. Here and there, however, the trunk of a fallen tree, partly lying on the bank and partly projecting beyond it, impedes their progress and requires to be doubled. This is performed by striking into it the iron points of the poles and gaff-hooks, and so pulling around it. The sun is now quite low, and the barge is again secured in the best harbor within reach for the night, after having accomplished a distance of perhaps fifteen miles. The next day the wind proves favorable, the sail is set, the boat takes all advantages, and meeting with no accident, has ascended thirty miles—perhaps double that distance. The next day comes with a very different aspect. The wind is right ahead, the shores are without trees of any kind, and the canes on the bank are so thick and stout that not even

the cordelles can be used. This occasions a halt. The time is not altogether lost, as most of the men, being provided with rifles, betake themselves to the woods and search for the hares, or the turkeys that are generally abundant there. Three days may pass before the wind changes, and the advantages gained on the previous five are forgotten. Again the boat proceeds, but in passing over a shallow place, runs on a log, swings with the current but hangs fast with her lee-side almost under water. Now for the poles! All hands are on deck, bustling and pushing. At length, towards sunset, the boat is once more afloat, and is again taken to the shore where the wearied crew pass another night.

I could tell you of the crew abandoning the boat and cargo and of numberless accidents and perils, but be it enough to say, that advancing in this tardy manner, the boat that left New Orleans on the 1st of March, often did not reach the Falls of Ohio, Louisville, until the month of July, sometimes not until October; and after all this immense trouble, it brought only a few bags of coffee and at most one hundred hogsheads of sugar. Such was the state of things as late as 1808. The number of barges at that period did not amount to more than twenty-five or thirty, and the largest probably did not exceed one hundred tons burden. To make the best of this fatiguing navigation, I may conclude by saying that a barge which came up in three months, had done wonders, for I believe few voyages were performed in that time.

In the interval between the opening of the nineteenth century and the advent of the steamboat there is a romantic chapter in Ohio River navigation. It is the story of the decade of brig and schooner building—when Ohio Valley promoters sought to establish a trade with Europe and the Indies. In those days of sailing craft all of the greater streams were commercial arteries taking the place of our railways to-day. There were few or no roads. When, then, the “Monongahela country” began to export produce and manufactures, enterprising men were soon at work planning to build

up a trade with the South and with Europe. There were many times each year when the Ohio would float sea-going vessels. Before the nineteenth century dawned, even, these were being built.

At that moment Spain and France held the Mississippi and obstructed that outlet for western commerce. For a time it seemed as though war would ensue and in 1798 and 1799 the two armed galleys, *President Adams* and *Senator Ross*, were built in Pittsburg for service on the Mississippi in the event of trouble. Major Craig wrote in May, 1798:

On the 19th inst. the galley "President Adams" was launched, and is now at anchor in the Allegheny. She will be completely equipped in a few days, and will, I am confident, be as fine a vessel of her burden and construction, as the United States possesses. The keel of the second galley is laid, and the materials prepared. [Later he adds] The galley "Senator Ross" has been launched, and is now rigged, and will, in a few days, be fully equipped for the Mississippi. She is anchored in the Monongahela, abreast of the town. She is certainly a fine piece of naval architecture, and one which will far exceed anything the Spaniards can show on the Mississippi.

It was in the year of 1800, probably, that the first ocean rigged vessel weighed anchor on the Ohio for the sea. The first of such craft seems to have been the good ship *St. Clair*, a brig of 110 tons, built at Marietta on the Muskingum River at the foot of Monroe Street, by Stephen Devol, for Charles Greene & Co., of Marietta. Its commander was the old hero Commodore Abraham Whipple, who almost precipitated the Revolutionary War in 1772, by leading that famous party which destroyed the *Gaspee* in Narragansett Bay, in 1772, and to whom Sir William Wallace wrote the famous message: "You, Abraham Whipple, burned

his Majesty's vessel *Gaspee* and I will hang you at yard arm. [Signed] William Wallace." The *St. Clair* cleared Marietta in May, 1800, with a cargo of flour and pork for Havana. The spectacle of this Revolutionary hero taking to sea again a generation later in the first sea-going vessel that ever descended the Ohio was considered worthy of a celebration. Captain Jonathan Devol of Marietta contributed a poem, in which Neptune greets the hero of olden time. The last verse reads:

But now he comes from the western woods  
Descending slow with gentle floods  
The pioneer of a mighty train,  
Which commerce brings to my domain.  
Up! Sons of the wave,  
Greet the noble and the brave,  
Present your arms unto him.  
His gray hair shows  
Life 's near its close;  
Let 's pay the honors due him.  
Sea attend with lute and lyre,  
And bring your conches my Triton sons;  
A chorus blow to the aged sire,  
A welcome to my dominions.

The "Falls of the Ohio" were safely passed and the *St. Clair* anchored off New Orleans early in July. The Cuban capital was reached and in August the *St. Clair* cleared with a cargo of sugar for Philadelphia. In this port she was sold, her commander returning by land to Marietta. The venture was a success and several boat-yards now began building ships for sea; two were built in 1801, four in 1803, two in 1804, and eleven in the next four years. In 1808 Jefferson's embargo act was a severe blow to the Ohio ship-building industry.





Admiral Abraham Whipple.



Fortunately there is preserved for us considerable information of these ship-building days in the annals of a famous old-time "Monongahela country" port. In 1800 there was formed at Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, what was known as the Monongahela Company, and a schooner of 250 tons was built and named *Monongahela Farmer*. On a June freshet, 1801, this ship departed for southern ports. She was in the charge of Mr. John Walker, who bore the title of "Master and Supercargo of the Schooner *Monongahela Farmer* and cargo." The instructions given Captain Walker throw much light on the history of this early sea-going vessel; the first to descend the Ohio of which we have any clear record:

ELIZABETH TOWN, PA.

11th May, 1801.

MR. JOHN WALKER, SIR,—You being appointed Master & Supercargo of the Schooner, *Monongahela Farmer* and the cargo thereof by the Monongahela Company, and as you have given Bond and Security for the faithful performance of the duties belonging thereto, you are hereby directed to go on Board of and take charge of the said vessel and cargo (with the hands you have engaged for the purpose) and proceed without unnecessary delay to the City of New Orleans and there you are if you find it necessary to employ on commission Cochern and Wray, or any other house you in your Judgement may think proper, to assist you in entering and selling said vessel and Cargo, which you will perform on the Best terms and in as short a time as possible (at the same time exercising your Judgement and acquiring every information in your power with respect to the probable rise or fall of the markets on account of which it may be proper to delay for some time) you are to Keep a true account of the sales you make, and all the Bills thereof you are to produce as vouchers, as also a true statement of the expenses of necessary out-lays. Provided nevertheless that should the market for flour be low at New Orleans and the

vessel appear to sell to disadvantage You in that case have it in your power to sell a part of the cargo, to purchase riging, fit out the vessel and employ hands to sail her to any of the Islands you in your Judgement and to the Best information May think best, and there make sale of the Vessel & Cargo. In either cases you are as soon as the Sales are made to return by the most advantageous route in your opinion with the proceeds of the Sales (after paying the necessary expenses) and put them into the hands of David Pollock & John Robison, Trustees for the said company, in order that a dividend be made to the owners agreeable to their inputs.

We for ourselves and on behalf of said Company wish you a prosperous voyage and a speedy return.

JACOB FERREE,  
JOHN ROBISON,  
DAVID POLLOCK.

From Louisville Captain Walker wrote the following picturesque letter to his wife:

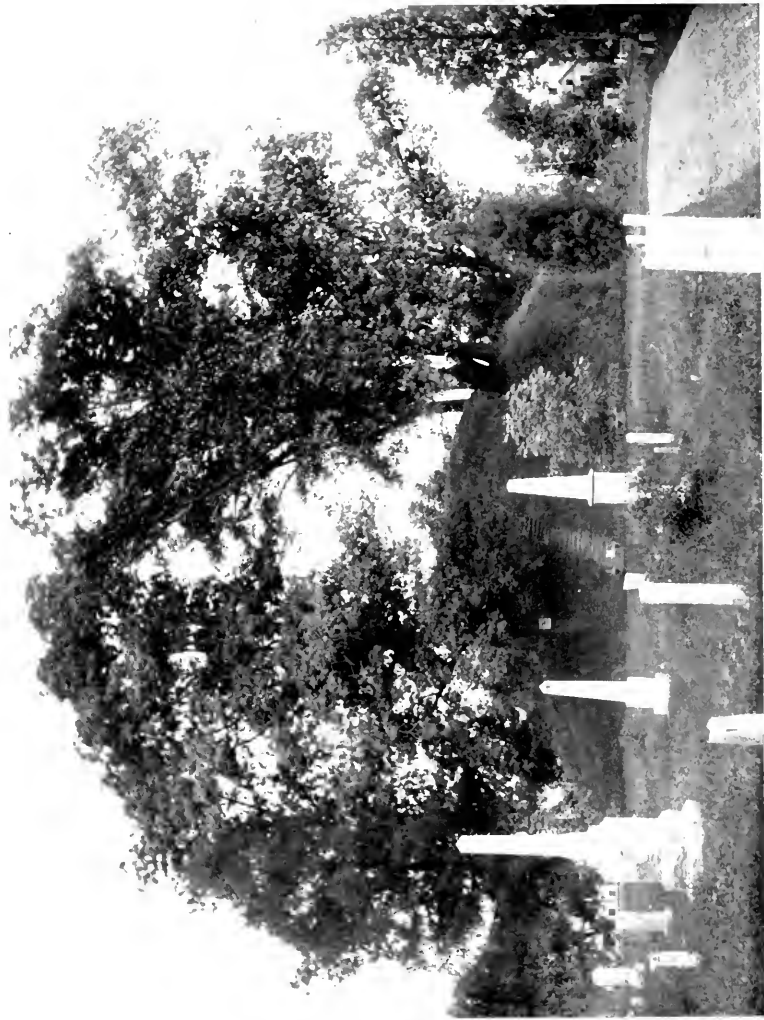
August the 26, 1801.

On board the Schooner Monongahela Farmer,

LOUISVILLE, FALLS OF OHIO.

DEAR WIFE: I received your letter dated August 4, which gave me a great deal of satisfaction, to hear that you were all well at that time, hoping these may find you all as well as when you wrote me. I have had my health very well so far, thanks be to Providence for it, though it is not very healthy here. Job McGill has got the fever now, but appears to be getting a little better. I pass the time away, but very dull since Job has been sick, as he is out in a boarding house, and I sleep in the vessel alone.

I have been out at some of my acquaintances near this place—at Moses Kuykendall's, Caty Hart's and Jack Frazier's. You may tell Polly Wall that her sister that lives with Mr. Kuykendall has joined the Baptist church and been baptized, as well as those I have just mentioned. There is a great stir of religion through a great many parts of Kentucky, though it is not here, for I believe that Louisville is as wicked as any place in the world. I have been creditably informed that there have been



The Mound in 'Mound Cemetery' at Marietta, Ohio, Showing the Grave of Admiral Whipple in the Foreground surrounded by an Iron Railing.



as many as five thousand people at one sacrament together, some of all denominations, and have camped on the ground for four or five days. I have been told that there have been as many as three hundred converts in one day, and that there is no distinction between the Presbyterians and Methodists, but helping each other to comfort the poor sinner at such times.

There was a curious circumstance took place here last week, it being court times, between a Mr. Allen and a Mr. Dickkeson, both Esquires, Attorneys at law. The latter gave Mr. Allen a challenge, which he soon accepted, and they crossed the Ohio on Friday morning, with their seconds. When over, their seconds, measuring off the ground between them, back to back, then giving the word to march five steps, wheel and fire, which they soon did. Allen was wounded in the shoulder and the other in the belly, though supposed not to be mortal. They were both men of family. The affront was given at a low table, as I understand.

I have heard that Lieutenant Brown is married. Please to wish him much joy for me.

Our vessel stands the hot weather much better than I expected, but our flour does not stand it so well.

I wish you to keep in as good spirits as possible until I return, which I expect will not be a great while, if God spares me. I have nothing more at present, but remain your loving husband until death,

JOHN WALKER.

DIANA WALKER.

The *Monongahela Farmer* was delayed several months at the "Falls of the Ohio" before sufficient water came to carry the boat over; she was again delayed on what has since been known as Walker's Bar above Hurricane Island. New Orleans was at last reached in the fall of 1801; and, though the flour had soured, Captain Walker advantageously disposed of the rest of the cargo and the ship. Full-rigged by her new owners the schooner built from the forests of the far-away "Monongahela country" had a useful career

on the Mississippi and, later, it is said, in the New York and West Indies trade.

The French name Tarascon will ever live on the Ohio River. Louis Anastius Tarascon emigrated from France in 1794 and became a merchant at Philadelphia.

In 1799 [writes Mr. George H. Thurston] he sent two of his clerks, Charles Brugiere and James Berthoud, to examine the course of the Ohio and Mississippi from Pittsburg to New Orleans and ascertain the practicability of sending ships, and clearing them ready rigged, from Pittsburg to Europe and the West Indies. The two gentlemen reported favorably, and Mr. Tarascon associated them, and his brother, John A. Anthony, with himself, under the firm of John A. Tarascon Brothers, James Berthoud & Co., and immediately established at Pittsburg a wholesale and retail store and warehouse, a ship-yard, a sail and rigging loft, an anchor smithshop, a block manufactory and all other things necessary to complete sea-going vessels. The first year, 1801, they built the schooner "Amity," of 120 tons, and the ship "Pittsburg" of 250 tons, and sent the former, loaded with flour, to Philadelphia, from whence they sent them to Bordeaux, France, and brought back a cargo of wine, brandy and other French goods, part of which they sent in wagons to Pittsburg at a carriage of from six to eight cents a pound. In 1802 they built the brig "Nanina," of 250 tons; in 1803 the ship "Louisiana" of 300 tons and 1804 the ship "Western Trader" of 400 tons.

The *Pittsburg Gazette* of December 31, 1802, says:

On Thursday afternoon, the 23d inst., was launched from the ship-yard of Tarascon Bros., Jas. Berthoud & Co., the schooner "Amity," burden 100 tons.

And in the same paper under an April date, we read:

The ship "Pittsburg" and the schooner "Amity," launched a short time before, . . . cleared from this port, the former for Lisbon and the latter for St. Thomas, loaded with flour. The "Pittsburg" registered 270 tons, the largest boat built thus far on western waters.



Thaddeus Harris saw the *Amity* and *Pittsburg* pass Marietta May 5th; his record is:

The following day there passed down the schooner "Amity" of 193 tons, from Pittsburg, and the ship "Pittsburg" of 275 tons burden, from the same place, laden with seventeen hundred barrels of flour, with the rest of her cargo in flat-bottomed boats. In the evening the brig "Mary Avery," of 130 tons, built at Marietta, set sail. These afforded an interesting spectacle to the inhabitants of this place, who saluted the vessels as they passed with three cheers, and by firing a small piece of ordnance from the banks.

Mr. Harris saw a schooner, *Dorcas and Sally* by name, of 70 tons, which had been built at Wheeling and rigged at Marietta, and speaks also of the *Muskingum* (204 tons), *Eliza Greene* (115 tons), *Indiana* (100 tons), and brig *Marietta* (130 tons), all built at Marietta. Of these ships he writes:

Good judges of naval architecture have pronounced these vessels equal, in point of workmanship and materials, to the best that have been made in America. The firmness and great length of their planks, and the excellency of their timbers (their frames being almost wholly composed of black walnut, a wood which, if properly selected, has nearly the strength of white oak, and the durability of the live oak of the south without its weight) it is believed will give these vessels the preference over any built of the timber commonly made use of, in any market where there are competent judges. This part of the country owes much to those gentlemen, who, in a new and experimental line, have set this example of enterprise and perseverance.

But after the first successes it was realized that the Ohio was unfavorable for the operation of these deep-bellied ships; the floods were too uncertain and the myriad obstacles too dangerous considering the amount of money at hazard. In a decade the ship-building business had quite ceased; misfortunes and accidents

“have given a damp,” an old writer puts it, 1811, “to ships building at present.”

But the dawning of a new day in inland navigation was at hand; not so picturesque as the old but far more successful.



The First Floating Mill on the Ohio.  
Redrawn from Hildreth's "Memoirs of the Pioneer Settlers of Ohio."



## Chapter XI

### From Pittsburg to Louisville in 1806

THE Ohio River is a commonplace affair to those who live beside it to-day; its floods, droughts, and other phases receive but slight notice unless property is in danger. Few, if any, are leaving on paper a record of the river in what are perhaps the last years preceding a new era of slack-water navigation. If anything approximating true pictures of the river are being preserved it is being done, no doubt, by travellers who see the valley and are interested in matters which are too commonplace to be noted by those who meet them every day.

Now, this was exactly the case a century ago; it was those who, seemingly, knew least of the river that left the best accounts of it. Thousands who lived by the Ohio one hundred years ago to-day could have left us valuable records of great interest if they could only have realized sufficiently that what was humdrum and ordinary to them would not have been so to us of another century. The result was that travellers in the valley left the best descriptions of it, and while many of their statements were overdrawn and often incorrect, yet there are left some remarkably vivid pictures that will have a lasting value.

One of these was from the pen of the erratic and

opinionated but honest Thomas Ashe, the English traveller; and as a description of the Ohio of a century ago it probably stands, despite some extravagance of statement, unequalled in accuracy and vividness. Leaving Pittsburg (1806), he descended the river in a flatboat, which he describes, together with many things and people he saw. Some of his more interesting paragraphs read as follows:

The settlements on each side of the Ohio are extensive, and much of the land is good and well cultivated. The appearance of the rising towns and the regularly disposed farms on its banks, is truly delightful to passengers. In autumn and spring it is generally covered with what are here called trading and family boats; the former loaded with flour, whiskey, cyder, apples, peach-brandy, bacon, iron, glass, earthen ware, cabinet work, &c., all being the produce and manufacture of the country, and destined for Kentucky and New-Orleans: and the latter carrying furniture, utensils, and tools for the cultivation of the soil. No scene can be more pleasing to a philosophic mind than this; which presents to view a floating town, as it were, on the face of a river, whose gentle rapidity and flowered banks add sublimity to cheerfulness; and the sweet harmony of the songsters of the woods, to the hoarseness of the falling cataract or the murmur of the quiet stream.

The numerous islands that are interspersed in this river, add much to the grandeur of its appearance, but they very much embarrass the navigation, particularly in low water, as they occasion a great many shoals and sand bars. The soil of those islands is, for the most part, very rich, the timber luxuriant, and the extent of some of them considerable. Where fruit trees have been planted, they are found to thrive, to bear well, and seldom fail of a crop. Indeed this is the case wherever fruit trees have been tried on the river bottoms, the soil of which is very similar to that of the islands, though not quite so sandy.

In times of high freshies, and during the effusion of ice and snow from the Allegheny and other mountains, vessels of almost

any tonnage may descend; and it is never so low but that it may be navigated by canoes and other light craft, not drawing more than twelve inches water. The highest floods are in spring, when the river rises forty-five feet; the lowest are in summer, when it sinks to twelve inches on the bars, ripples, and shoals where waggons, carts, &c. frequently pass. Many of the impediments however which are to be met with when the water is low, might in a dry time be got rid of, and at no very considerable expense; at least the expense would be by no means beyond the advantages which would accrue from the undertaking if properly managed. Rocks, that now during the dry season, obstruct or render dangerous the large flat bottomed, or what are called Kentucky boats, might be blasted; channels might be made through the ripples; and the snags, and fallen timber along the banks entirely removed.

The first thing to be attended to by emigrants, or travellers, wishing to descend the river, is to procure a boat, to be ready so as to take advantage of the times of flood, and to be careful that the boat be a good one; for many of the accidents that happen in navigating the Ohio and Mississippi, are owing to the unpardonable carelessness and penuriousness of the boat builder, who will frequently slight his work, or make it of injured plank; in either case putting the lives and properties of a great many persons to manifest hazard. This egregious misconduct should long before this time been rectified, by the appointment of a boat inspector at different places on the Monongahela. But as this has never been done, it belongs to every person purchasing Kentucky boats, which is the sort I allude to, to get them narrowly examined before the embarkation, by persons who may know a little of the strength and form of a boat suitable to a voyage of this kind. He must also remember this, that a boat destined for the Mississippi, requires to be much stronger timbered, and somewhat differently constructed, from one designed only to descend the Ohio.

Flat bottomed boats may be procured almost everywhere along the Monongahela River, and in some places on the Youghiogheny; very few are as yet built on the Allegheny, as the chief places of embarkation are confined to the Monongahela

and Ohio. Keel boats and vessels of burden are also built at Brownsville, Elizabeth's-town, and many other places on the two last mentioned rivers.

The best seasons for navigating the Ohio are spring and autumn. The spring season commences at the breaking up of the ice, which generally happens about the middle of February, and continues good for about three months. The autumn generally commences in October, and continues till about the first of December, when the ice begins to form. But the alternations of high water can scarcely be called periodical, as they vary considerably, according to the wetness or dryness of the season, or earliness or lateness of the setting in, or breaking up of winter. The winter of 1802 was even an exception to every other, the Monongahela not having been closed at all with ice, so that there was nothing to impede the passage of boats into the Ohio, &c. This circumstance is the more extraordinary, the winters in general being very severe, some of which a few years past, kept the rivers blocked up for more than two months at a time. The cause of these sudden and great changes may usefully occupy the philosophic mind.

Nor are freshes in the rivers entirely confined to the spring and autumn: it does not infrequently happen that a considerable quantity of rain falls in the Apalachian ridges, whence the rivers and creeks that supply the Monongahela proceed, during the summer months; a swelling of the currents of the Allegheny and other rivers, sometimes also happens, and occasions a sufficient supply of water during the same period to render the navigation of the Ohio perfectly eligible. These rains, or freshes, however, must not be depended on, and when they occur, must be taken immediate advantage of as the waters subside rapidly.

When provided with a good boat and strong cable of at least forty feet long, there is little danger in descending the river in high freshes, using due precaution, unless at times when there is much floating ice. Great exertion with the oars, at such times, generally speaking, is of no manner of use; in fact, it is rather detrimental than otherwise, by often throwing the boat out of the current in which she ought to continue, and



which will carry her along with more rapidity, and at the same time always take her right. By trusting to the current there is no danger to be feared in passing the islands, as it will carry the boat by them in safety. On the other hand, if persons row, and by so doing happen to be in the middle of the river, on approaching an island, there is great danger of being thrown on the upper point of it before they are aware, or have time to regain the true current. In case they get aground in such a situation, become entangled among the aquatic timber, which is generally abundant, or be driven by the force of the water among the *tops* or trunks of other trees, they may consider themselves in imminent danger; and nothing but *presence of mind* and great exertion can extricate them from such a dilemma.

Persons should contrive to land as seldom as possible; they need not even lie by at night, provided they trust to the current and keep a good look out. When they bring to, the strength of their cable is their principal safe-guard. A quantity of fuel, provisions, and other necessaries, should be laid in at once, and every boat should have a skiff or canoe along side, to land on shore when necessary.

Though the labor of navigating this river in times of fresh is very considerable to what it is during low water, when continual rowing is necessary, it is always best to keep a good look out, and be strong handed. The winds sometimes drive boats too near the points of the islands, or in projecting parts of the main shore, when considerable extra exertion is necessary to surmount the difficulty. Boats most commonly meet with head winds, as the river is so very crooked, that what is in their favour one hour will probably be against them in the next, and when a contrary wind contends with a strong current, it is attended with considerable inconvenience, and requires careful and circumspect management, otherwise the boats must be driven on shore in spite of all the efforts of their crews. One favourable circumstance is, that the wind commonly abates about sun-set in summer.

Boats have frequently passed from Pittsburg to the mouth of the Ohio in fifteen days. However, twenty days is a good

spring passage. In summer, six, eight, and even ten *weeks* are often required to effect the same voyage.<sup>1</sup>

Descending the river when much incommoded with floating ice, should be as much as possible avoided, particularly early in winter, as there is a great probability of its stopping the boats; however, if the water be high and there be an appearance of open weather, they may venture, unless the cakes of ice be so heavy as to impede their progress, or injure their timbers; the boats will in such case make more way than the ice, a great deal of which will sink, and get thinner as it progresses; but, on the other hand, if the water be low, it is by no means safe to embark on it when anything considerable of ice remains.

If at any time boats are obliged to bring to on account of the ice, great circumspection should be used in the choice of a spot to lie in. There are many places where the shore, projecting to a point, throws off the flakes of ice towards the middle of the river, and forms a kind of harbour below. By bringing to in such a situation, and fixing the canoe above the boat, with one end strongly to the shore, and the other out in the stream, sloping down the river, so as to drive out such masses of ice as would otherwise accumulate on the upper side of the boat, and tend to sink her and drive her from her moorings, a boat may lie with a tolerable degree of safety. This is a much better method than that of felling a tree on the shore above, so as to fall partly into the river; for if, in its fall, it does not adhere in some measure to the stump, or rest sufficiently on the bank, the weight of accumulated ice will be apt to send it adrift, and bring it down, ice and all, on the boat, when no safety can be expected from it; nor any means of extrication from so great a dilemma.

The settlements themselves frequently suffer by this their shameful prodigality and want of foresight, as boats on making them, and not finding an immediate fastening and safe landing, drop below the settlements never again to return; for it would take a flat boat and forty hands ten days to make good five miles against the stream. You must understand from the stress I have laid on the necessity of a fastening on shore, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ante, p. 102, note.



View in the Ohio Valley.  
From Schoolcraft's "Indian Tribes of America."



a good landing place, that flat boats never carry an anchor. The method to run the boat ashore is, jump hastily out, and fasten a line or cable round a stump, tree, &c.; or hold on till a stake be cut and driven in the ground for the same purpose.

I purchased, for forty dollars, on the Monongahela a Kentucky boat. I must describe such a thing to you, for it is no more like an English boat of any description, than it is like a church. An oblong frame is first made perhaps forty feet long by sixteen wide. The four pieces forming this frame are generally from fourteen to eighteen inches square, mortised so as to receive a number of bars across, on which are fastened thick planks with wooden pins—this forming the flat bottom of the boat. From the solid beams of the frame, rise several uprights, six feet high, to which boards are attached to form the ends and sides; after which the boat is roofed over except a small space through which the hands can drop or enter. The whole represents an oblong apartment—both ends perfectly square, and nothing indicates the bow but the small open space in the roof, and holes in the sides, through which the oars work. Boats of this sort are steered by a large oar, balanced on a pivot, issuing from the middle uprights of the stern. This is preferred to a tiller, which, by sinking too deep in the water, would risk being carried off by logs and shoals. I divided my boat into two apartments, that next the stern for my own accommodation; that next the head for my servants to cook, row, and keep a look out in; the roof served for the helmsman and as a quarter-deck, on which to parade. When I add to this, that I had a good chimney built in my boat; four windows made; that I laid in two coops-full of chickens, other kinds of stores, spirits, coffee, sugar, &c. I need not tell you how comfortable I set off, and how able I was to endure the vicissitudes of my intended voyages. My servants were Mindeth, my old follower, and Cuff, a mustee, of the Mandan nation; the former a strong laborious creature, the latter a fellow without any other character than that he knew something of the waters, was a good shot, and well acquainted with haunts of wild turkies, game, and wild beasts. I could have got another hand, for fifteen dollars a month, but as I was determined to steer myself and be

active in other respects, I departed but with two men. I cannot recommend this temerity to others: four hands are always necessary, and sometimes more.

Just below Macintosh, which is twenty eight miles from Pittsburg, is an island<sup>1</sup> called after the same name, a second island not named,<sup>2</sup> and a third called Grape island. On this last I landed, and soon discovered the propriety of the name: the passage through it in every direction was rendered intricate, by the multitudes of vines, which extended from tree to tree, rising to the tops of some, and closely embracing the bodies of others. Mindeth commenced preparations for dressing dinner; Cuff patiently sat on the side of the boat catching fish, and I took my gun and dog into the woods. I pierced to the left side of the island, a beautiful portion of which I found cleared, planted with Indian corn, and very promising wheat. A neat log-house soon appeared in view; I knocked, the door was opened by an old woman, about whom hung three children, the whole ematiated with sickness, and stained by the languid colors of death. They betrayed more fear than surprise, on beholding me. I banished this impression as soon as possible, by persuading the mother that I did not come to rob the house, or do her any manner of injury; that I was not a Kentucky man and that mere chance, not a disposition to plunder, brought me her way. On this she assumed some serenity; and told me that the Kentucky men so often landed on her island to steal her fruit, fowls, hogs, &c. that she was alarmed at the sight of others, from an apprehension of their coming with the same design. The husband who soon after came in, I found to be a German, who had lived long enough in Virginia to pick up some Negro-English. He informed me that, coming down the river four years past in his family boat, for want of keeping a good look out, or of knowing the river, he took the wrong channel, and stove his boat within two hundred yards of the spot where his house now stands. The water being shallow he got his goods ashore, and thinking the island possessed as good land as any he could procure elsewhere, he determined to pro-

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery's Island. (See *The Western Pilot*, 1829.)

<sup>2</sup> Phillis's Island.

ceed no further, but to pitch his tent where providence had cast him, and set and with a good heart about building a log house and clearing ground for maize, in the first instance, and then for wheat and other objects of agriculture. He effected this laborious purpose to admiration. His house was comfortable; his garden neat; and he had six acres of land under a crop which appeared perfectly thriving. He had bought a male and female pig, which had multiplied in the woods prodigiously, and nothing appeared to interrupt his happiness but the people of Kentuck, as he called all those who occasionally made a descent on his island, either to pursue game or to injure him. Robinson Crusoe never stood in so much dread of an Indian invasion as this German did of his own fellow citizens and inhabitants of a neighboring State. It was this apprehension it seems which hindered him from making his settlement on the channel side of the island, which, under any other impression would be infinitely superior; more eligible for market; and more interesting and convenient to the pleasures and comforts of life. In fact, he explained to me his motives in fewer words; they were precisely these:—"If the people of Kentuck, find me out sometimes in this silent part, how should I be able to live, when the sight of smoke, the crowing of cocks and the barking of dogs would call them all upon me?" . . .

I have known the fog remain till twelve at noon, and even for two or three hours after. At such times the navigation is more dangerous than on the darkest night. The channel, islands, rocks, ripples, snags, sawyers, and a variety of other dangers, are not visible.—The true channel cannot be seen, nor the true current observed; and, possibly, owing to the density of the atmosphere, the noise of the waters beating against objects necessarily to be avoided, remains drowned and unheard. I might with truth remark, that navigating at night is, in many respects, safer than in a foggy day. For at night the noise of water in falls and ripples, and against rocks and impediments, is heard at a much greater distance than it is on the finest day, much less on one, when sound would be retarded by vapour and corrupted air. I have heard the water roar on a fine night, to such a degree, as to impose a belief that I was immediately

approaching a dreadful fall or rumbling cataract. After running two hours, nearly ten miles, with the utmost precaution and constant look-out, I found the terrific noise to proceed from the current dashing through the top of a tree, whose root had got fast near the bed of the stream. In the day I have often seen a large tree almost erect, and in a similar situation; but the noise the passing water made over it was only to be heard when close at hand. These facts, though I do not presume to account for them, are equally singular and fortunate; at night the navigator is warned of danger he cannot see: in the day he beholds a danger which cannot be heard. There are, however, two alarming peculiarities belonging to the night, which should not go unnoticed. 1st. The current differs considerably in character from the current of the day. In the day its breadth is contracted, often to within the width of the boat, or less: and it delights in holding a favourite shore; so much so that it is difficult to steer clear of the bank, which, after caressing some hours, it hastily abandons, makes nearly across, as if to enjoy, for a certain time, the beauties of the opposite shore. In the night the current diffuses itself more generally—spreads out, and finally reaches the middle of the river, where it maintains itself with grace and majesty till the morning, when it contracts in sphere, increases in power, and alternately visits either bank. Were there no obstacles in the middle of the river, this circumstance of a nocturnal current, varying from the daily channel to the centre, would be highly favorable, but as islands and sand bars every three or four hours occur, it becomes dangerous. I must confess my ignorance of the latent principle which occasions the variation of current. My loose opinion on the subject is derived from observing, that in the day, the air, *nearly always*, has an inclination to come up the river, or to traverse it from side to side: and its action is also so high as to be seen on the leaves of the trees when the surface of the water is entirely unruffled. Whereas, at night, as the inclination of the air is always down the river, when unaffected by storms; and as the volume, density and weight of the air, are augmented to an incalculable degree, by the absence of the sun and the descent of his exhalations, it may be presumed that these great



changes in the direction and power of the atmosphere may operate a change on the current of the waters. The more so as it is known that the air and body of vapour, rejected by the sky after the setting of the sun, seek for the centre of rivers and the sinuosities, occasioned by valleys or creeks. This body of air then of power, course and volume, so superior and contrary to that of the day, pressing on the centre of the river, either cause there an additional current, or, by some secret law of attraction, draws the current of the day from the side to the centre. I find the observation made by all navigators to be, that a boat makes *much* more way at night, than in the day; and that it holds the middle of the river. You perceive, by this that I am supported in my fact, but I have never met with any one who could assist me to its elucidation. As to a boat's going faster at night, I am not quite so much at a loss for an argument; having on her an increased weight of atmosphere, and a course of air not running in opposition to the water, she must proceed with more velocity than when the sun deprives her of this pressure, and, by shifting the action of the air gives her a contrary impetus. But why a boat holds the middle of the river at night, in an apparent current, whose principle is dissipated on the return of day, I cannot determine; and what I have said, you are to consider as loose hints, and not as the result of systematic and philosophical opinion.

The second alarming peculiarity belonging to nocturnal navigation, is in the falsity of vision, and in the little dependence which can be placed on the judgment in regard to the distance, character, extent, and even nature of objects. I have heard of a man, who ran his boat on the point of an island, mistaking it for an object, which, for upwards of an hour before, he had imagined floating before him. And, more than once, on hearing the roaring of water, or apprehending some other danger below me, I have dropped down six miles while pulling for safety into a shore on which I thought I could have cast a biscuit when I first began to work across the stream. At other times I have been greatly deceived, on making land at night, as to my opinion of the nearest bank, after taking the nearest for the most distant, I have run the boat's head against a bank I calculated far from

me. My poor Mandanian, Cuff, whom I have more than once introduced to you, seeing me perplexed at a moment of expected danger, to know what shore to pull to, jumped on the roof of the boat, and giving it a sudden stroke with an oar, listening to the returning sound. The left shore first repeated the stroke; and next after a small interval, the right. "The left shore," said Cuff, with a modest confidence, "is but three hundred yards, and the right a mile from us."<sup>1</sup> He was perfectly correct; I was grateful to him for his instructions, nor could I check an idea, that the whites theorize on philosophy, while it is practised by the Indian: neither could I resist looking for further instruction; and asking him whether his rule held good on all occasions? he replied, as I might well have conceived, "It did not: that the echo in some few parts of the river, never answered at all; and, that in damp or rainy weather, it also failed telling which was the nearest side." I am confident, that in general the rule is good, and beneficial. . . .

Having lost considerable time in my late excursions, I being seduced by the fineness of the evening, and promised lightness of the night, determined on not bringing too till I should reach this place. I therefore continued on, past Amberson's Island, Goose Island, and by midnight came up to two islands which I understood to be but half a mile above Letart's Falls, universally feared as one of the most terrific parts of the navigation of the rivers. The roaring of the falls had reached us sometime before we made the islands, and reflections of propriety, safety, &c. were making such progress in my mind, that I began to repent of my determination, and to feel a disposition not to proceed any further till morning. Prudence may arrive too late. The channel past the islands was close to the right hand shore, yet I dared not put the boat's head towards it, the current being impetus, and the shore full of trunks of trees, breakers, and snags. Perceiving obstructions which were at once difficult and arduous to remove, I made preparations to shoot the falls. The men received many instructions with a silence which augured some fear; the waters uttered the most tremendous sounds, and the mist of their dashing rising into the air spread

<sup>1</sup> An instance of Mr. Ashe's exaggerations; the Ohio at no point approaches half a mile in width.

an apparent fog on their surface from side to side. The scene was awful; there was no alternative. I took the helm and placing the hands on each bow with a pole to guard against rocks, followed the current to the second island, from thence to about one third of the river from the right hand shore, and there held it to the falls. The boat took chute in the most capital manner, past through like the flight of a bird and never once turned round. In taking the chute, I observed a sunken rock to my right, that formed a very large ripple, and several others to my left, which caused the water to boil and make a grumbling dull noise. Instantly on dropping from the falls, it was necessary to take to the oars, to avoid an eddy of great power which sucked in logs and everything else within its attraction, and cast them up about two hundred yards lower down.

One of the most interesting, unaffected accounts of a voyage down the Ohio from Pittsburg is that of a manuscript *Diary* of a girl, Sally Ferson,<sup>1</sup> a part of which reads:

October 19, 1818, At one o'clock came into the famous city of Pittsburg. Put up at Solomon Lightcaps Market street; bought an excellent dinner; stone coal burnt here entirely. O, dear how it stinks, boys slept on board the boat. Put all our goods on board fine folks here.

Oct. 23, Clear and cool, at two o'clock left Pittsburg shore; went six miles and anchored not quite dark, Margaret not well. froze hard at night.

24, Clear and moderate, we ran on to three or four piles of rocks; I thought we should be dashed to pieces also ran afoul of a keel boat, but with all, but little damage. P.M. We took the wrong side of a bar; got aground the men got out into the river and lifted but could not start us. Near to a house a young man came with a skiff took father, all the women and some of the load on shore, then the man shoved her off, women staid in the house till dark got straw to fill out beds and milk

<sup>1</sup> Placed in the author's hands through the kindness of Frank Theodore Cole, LL.B., editor of the *Old Northwest Genealogical Quarterly*.

for supper. Margaret staid on shore all night very clever folks; name McKee.

25. Clear and warm got along safe at the mouth of Beaver creek went on shore; got a Pilot; women got out and walked, one and one half miles on the beach, when the Pilot got out, we got in. Had good going till dark, anchored went on shore, got milk and meal, cabbage beets and corn bread, from Mrs. Mitchel. Frooze hard at night.

26. Clear and warm. Margaret is well to-day. Past little Beaver ripple, rubbed on the rocks but received no damage, rest of the day had good sailing, got into the state of Ohio at twelve o'clock. Came to anchor one half an hour after dark; did not come to any house.

27. Clear and cool wind ahead. Mother not well; Margaret, Fanny, Father, Hadley and I got on shore and walked about three miles. Saw handsome farms, slept in a house till the boat came up, smart woman; making apple sauce and drying apples, went on board again at the head of Brown's Island, rubbed on the rocks but received no damage; anchored about sunset at Steubenville; sent out and bought bread; heard from Mr. Smith. Cloudy at night.

28. Clear and cool; Mr. T. Smith came to see us. O how glad we were to see him; we were all invited and went to Smith's were well treated; glad to leave the river and the rocks, water so low that we can not go, Miss Teaf came in and spent the evening.

29. Clear and warm, we got two barrels of water and did a very large washing; spent the evening at Miss Teaf's.

30. Clear and warm, opened some boxes found many things wet employed ourselves in drying and repacking them. P.M. Johnson and Fanny Mr. Hadley, John and Harriet and I went across the river into Virginia, went up a steep mountain into a dark cave. Called at the cotton factory as we came back. Spent the evening at Mrs. Coopers.

31. A. M. Clear and warm. P. M. Thunder lightning and rain. Sam set out for Columbus. Mr. Smith's four sons come from Wheeling. Glad to see us.

November 1, Cool and cloudy went to the Methodist

meeting, heard a sermon from Heb. 2, 6. heard noise enough. . . .

4. Cool left Steubenville [by land] at ten o'clock, left Mr. Hadley, Mr. Smith's folks gave us all presents; parted with sorrow; found good roads kept on the bank of Ohio went 12 miles; put up at Piles.

5. Clear very warm. left river road past through Warren, a small town, through Mount Pleasant, a small town, mostly brick houses.

It is remarkable enough that Mr. Ashe omits in his account a reference to the town of Gallipolis, particularly as it would have given him an excellent opportunity to indulge in his favorite pleasure of venting his spleen on all uninviting aspects of American civilization.

In any work on the Ohio River, or for that matter on the history of the West, Gallipolis deserves more than a passing notice. Few American towns have a more unique history. When the Ohio Company of Associates made their purchase from the United States government in 1787 of lands along the Ohio River, which we have described, we noted that an additional tract was purchased over and above the amount desired by the Ohio Company on the guarantee of certain New York speculators who were to form themselves into a Scioto Company and dispose of three and a half millions of acres of the purchased lands. A part of this land was to be sold to immigrants in Europe who desired to come to America.

It ought to be said in this connection, though few, if any, writers have alluded to it, that it was common at that early time to send to Europe to get pioneers to settle on the new lands of the West. Governor Johnson of Maryland thus populated his fine Allegheny "Glades," and Washington more than once took up

seriously the problem of sending to Europe to secure immigrants to grub and till his vast landed estate west of the Alleghenies.<sup>1</sup> It was not, therefore, all out of order, as has sometimes been implied, for such a company as the Scioto Company to plan to seat their lands by inducing foreigners to buy them.

Joel Barlow, the poet of the Revolution, was unfortunately selected by the Scioto Company as European agent, and he put off for France, where the state of internal affairs was such as to promise well for a company desiring to secure immigrants to America. In Paris Barlow enlisted the co-operation of certain Frenchmen who became stockholders in the Company, and after a year's propaganda matters began to look up; many "locations" were sold and many families were preparing to emigrate. A financial panic swept New York and ruined those most closely identified with the Scioto Company and its lands reverted to the government. Moreover the locations sold in France lay, by a mistake in estimating the probable position of the western boundary line of the seventeenth range, in the Ohio Company's purchase and not in the Scioto Company's—where, nearly opposite the mouth of the Great Kanawha River, Barlow had asked that cabins for at least an hundred immigrants should be prepared in advance.

In February, 1790, about six hundred immigrants set sail from Havre de Grace in five chartered ships for America, and in three months arrived at Alexandria, Virginia. Their high hopes of a pleasant future were doomed to end in inexpressible disappointment; the lands for which they had paid hard-earned savings were

<sup>1</sup>See Jared Sparks, *Writings of Washington*.



Gallipolis, Ohio

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never to be theirs, partly through the inefficiency of Barlow, partly through the speculations of certain of the French stockholders of the Scioto Company, and partly through the failures already described. Through the instrumentality of Colonel Duer the homeseekers were at last started on the long journey across the mountains, and a large number of the entire party reached the town soon to be known from them, Gallipolis. General Putnam, acting on request of Colonel Duer, had had eighty huts erected for the newcomers, the vanguard of which arrived October 20, 1790.

In another place we shall call attention to the marvellous race mixture that Providence strangely ordained should take place in the Ohio Basin. Though not as prominent as the other strains of blood, this French colony at Gallipolis must not be forgotten; its sterling citizens took a part in the great work of empire building, few towns of equal size in the valley giving a better quality of brain and brawn to the work than Gallipolis. In 1795 Congress did itself the great honor of passing the "French Grant" Act. By it 24,000 acres were to be distributed among all Frenchmen in Gallipolis eighteen years of age and over. The Ohio Company in the same year was equally liberal, and allowed the inhabitants of Gallipolis to purchase the two fractional sections on which the town was situated at a nominal price per acre.

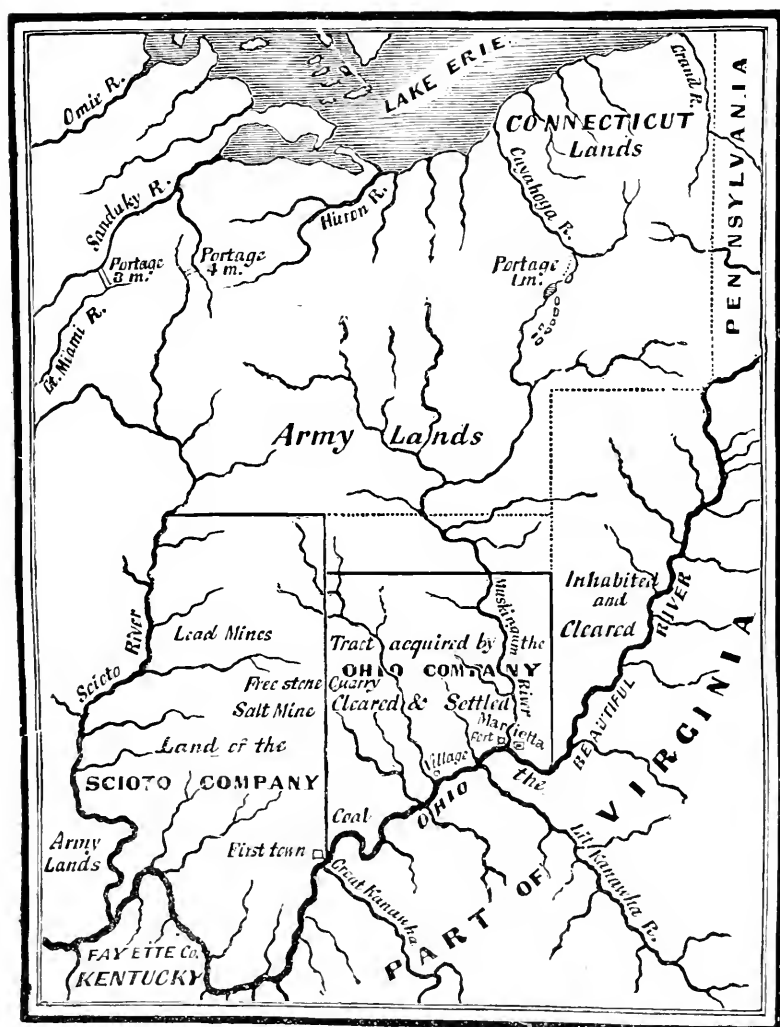
What had been known for so long as the "Falls of the Ohio" received considerable attention from Mr. Ashe, and his description of them, despite exaggerations, is undoubtedly one of the best that has come down to us:

The first intimation I had of the approach to Louisville was

the roaring of the falls, which reached me at the distance of fifteen miles. Four miles farther on gave me a fine view of the town which stands about two miles above the falls on the Kentucky shore. The entire *coup d'œil* is very grand, but the disposition to admire is drowned in the murmur of the waters, and the danger it announces to the mind. As the falls cannot be passed without a pilot and a number of extra hands to govern the helm and the oars, it is always necessary to look out within five or six miles, and pull in for the left shore before there is a possibility of getting into the suction of the fall stream, and from thence into the vortex of the flood. By my not attending to this in time I was very near perishing. The velocity of the water increased; the uproar of the falls became tremendous, and nothing but the continued and vigorous exertion of the oars saved us from sudden and violent perdition. We rowed one hour across the stream and got into dull water, but five minutes before our deaths must have been certain; whereas had I pulled in on seeing the town, I might have dropped quietly down along the bank, and enjoyed the grandeur and sublimity of the general scene, in the place of experiencing so much labour and apprehension.

Having secured the boat in the mouth of Bear Grass Creek, I walked up to the town of Louisville, which is situated on a high and level bank of the Ohio, about two hundred poles above the commencement of the rapid descent of the water, and contains about eighty dwellings, besides the court-house of Jefferson county, and other public buildings. The prospect from the town is very extensive, commanding a view up the river, for some distance above what is called Six Mile Island; and on the opposite shore, which is the distance of one mile and a quarter, the eye is carried over an extent of level country, terminated by the hills of Silver Creek, which are five miles distant, and down the river to Clarksville, about two miles below.

Here the magnificence of the scene, the grandeur of the falls, the unceasing brawl of the cataract, and the beauty of the surrounding prospect, all contribute to render the place truly delightful, and to impress every man of observation who beholds it with ideas of its future importance, till he enquires



A Map Circulated in France by Agents of the Scioto Company.

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more minutely, and discovers a character of unhealthiness in the place, which forbids the encouragement of any hope of its permanency or improvement. . . .

The inhabitants are universally addicted to gambling and drinking. The billiard rooms are crowded from morning to night, and often all night through. I am the more concerned to see the prevalence of these vices, as I experience a liberality and attention in the town, which has given me an interest in the general welfare of its people.

I visited the falls of the Ohio on the sand side, and found them occasioned by a ledge of rocks which extended quite across the river, and are hardly to be perceived by the navigator in times of high freshes, unless by the superior velocity of the vessel. When the water is low, as it is at this period, the greater part of the rock becomes visible, and then the passage becomes highly dangerous. There are three channels in the rock through which the water passes. The rapids descend about thirty feet in the length of a mile and a half. The rise of the waters does not exceed twelve or fourteen feet, and has at times sunk to ten inches. A part of the rock remains in the middle of the river and has never been overflowed, though it wastes every day by the constant action of the waters, and attrition of pebble stones cast up by the impetuosity of the current. It commands the settlement of Louisville. The fort, however, is situated at the head of the falls.

A pilot, for the safe conduct of boats through those falls, has been regularly appointed by the State; he is answerable for all damages sustained through his neglect or bad management. The price for pilotage of all kinds are regulated by the same authority.—A light boat can pass at all times when directed by a skilful pilot; and if it should be found necessary to unload at Bear Grass, and reload below the falls, the portage is very inconsiderable, being only two miles.

Notwithstanding the low state of the water, and the imminent peril of the passage, I determined on taking the chute without further delay, and lay my boat up below the falls, while I returned to the town, and made a short excursion through the country. I accordingly sent for the head pilot. He informed

me that he feared a thunder gust was collecting. The late violent heats, and the prognostics declared by the noise of the falls, and the vapour suspended over them, were strong portentions of a storm, and made the passage too hazardous to be taken at the pilot's risk. Whenever I have determined on acting, I have not easily been turned from my intentions. This habit or obstinacy made me persist in going, and I told the pilot to prepare immediately, and that I would take the consequence of any loss on my own head. He agreed and repaired to my boat with six additional hands, and I shortly followed him accompanied by two ladies and a gentleman, who had courage to take the fall out of mere curiosity, notwithstanding the great peril with which the act was allied. We all embarked. The oars were manned with four men each. The pilot and I governed the helm, and my passengers sat on the roof of the boat. A profound silence reigned. A sentiment of awe and terror occupied every mind, and urged the necessity of a fixed and resolute duty. In a few minutes we worked across the eddy and reached the current of the north fall, which hurried us on with an awful swiftness, and made impressions vain to describe. The water soon rushed with a more horrid fury, and seemed to threaten destruction even to the solid rock which opposed its passage in the centre of the river, and the terrific and incessant din with which this was accompanied almost overcome and unnerved the heart. At the distance of half a mile a thick mist, like volumes of smoke, rose to the skies, and as we advanced we heard a more sullen noise, which soon after almost stunned our ears. Making as we proceeded the north side, we were struck with the most terrific event and awful scene. The expected thunder burst at once in heavy peals over our heads, and the gusts with which it was accompanied raged up the river, and held our boat in agitated suspense on the verge of the precipitating flood. The lightning, too, glanced and flashed on the furious cataract, which rushed down with tremendous fury within sight of the eye. We doubled the most fatal rock, and though the storm encreased to a dreadful degree, we held the boat in the channel, took the *chute*, and following with skilful helm its narrow and winding bed, filled with rocks, and confined by a vortex which appears the residence of death,



The "Falls of the Ohio" at Louisville, Kentucky.  
From an oil painting.





we floated in uninterrupted water of one calm continued sheet. The instant of taking the fall was certainly sublime and awful. The organs of perception were hurried along, and partook of the turbulence of the roaring water. The powers of recollection were even suspended by the sudden shock; and it was not till after a considerable time that I was enabled to look back and contemplate the sublime horrors of the scene from which I had made so fortunate an escape.

When in smooth water and my mind somewhat collected, I attended to the ladies who had the temerity to honour me with their company through the hazard of the falls. I found them in a very exhausted state. The thunder had entirely unnerved them. I must do them the justice, however, to say that they shewed great magnanimity:—they suppressed their feelings, and never uttered a cry, for fear of intimidating or interrupting the hands. On getting on shore they quickly recovered, and we enjoyed a pleasant walk back to the town, and passed the evening with that serene delight which is only known to those who have experienced an equally extraordinary and eventful day.

Very shortly there will be no necessity of boats encountering such rocks. A canal is now constructing on each side the Ohio, by which means vessels may descend at all seasons, and without the possibility of accident or danger. For some time back from eight to twelve boats have been lost annually, and many have been detained for want of water. Therefore the canal must prove a grand acquisition, and extend benefit far and wide. It is to be finished in two years, and will be about three miles in length.

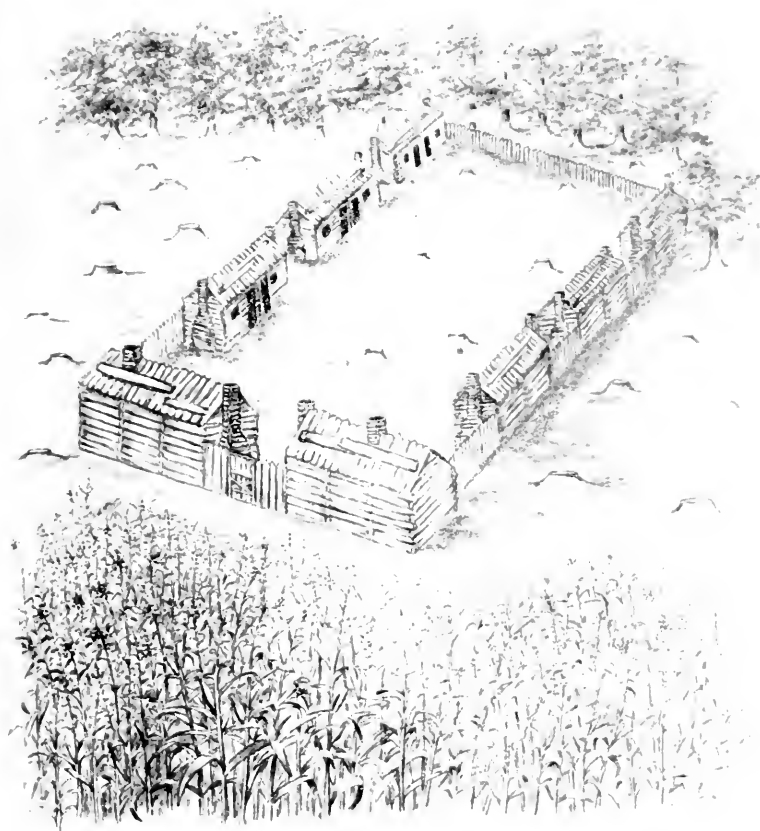
As we have quoted in our story of the Revolutionary War, Louisville was founded by a few families that accompanied George Rogers Clark to the "Falls of the Ohio," on May 27, 1778. Of these first citizens of Louisville, who boldly erected their cabins on Corn Island, we have the names of five: James Patton, Richard Chenowith, William Faith, John Tewell, and

John McManness; ten other heads of families are given by Mr. Durratt in his *The Centenary of Louisville*.

When General Clark returned from the Vincennes campaign he took up his residence in Louisville and drew a plan of the proposed town as he thought it ought to be built.

From his little red room in the Fort [writes Mr. Durratt], at the foot of Twelfth Street, he looked far into the future and saw the need of public grounds for breathing-places when the city should become populous. His map shows all the ground between Main Street and the river, from First to Twelfth streets, marked "public." Also a strip of ground half a square in width, just south of Jefferson Street, running the whole length of the town, marked "public." If this plan of the town had been accepted by the Trustees and adhered to by their successors, Louisville would be one of the handsomest cities on the continent to-day. The Trustees, however, for want of capacity to see the advantages of holding property for the public, or from necessity to pay debts against it, sold all this property except the Court-House square and the grave-yard. It brought but little when sold. It would be worth millions now in the shape of park property, with a number of grand old forest trees upon it. This map of General Clark only extends to Jefferson Street, but tradition says that it was a part of his plan to have the strip of ground it shows south of Jefferson repeated at intervals of every three squares as the city should enlarge.

In 1782 the old "Twelfth Street Fort," called the White Home, gave way to Fort Nelson, named in honor of Governor Nelson of Virginia and covered an acre of ground on the Ohio shore at the foot of Seventh Street. This was one of the strongest fortifications in the West and was used until Fort Finney was built across the river on the present site of Jefferson, Indiana, probably in 1784. General Clark has his headquarters in Fort Nelson; it served as a court-house until one was built, and a portion of it served as a jail.



Blockhouse and Log Cabins on Corn Island, 1778, First Settlement of  
Louisville, Ky.

From a ground-plan by George R. Clark.



The appearance of the site of Louisville in the days of Clark was not inviting; the heavy forests of oak, hickory, walnut, hackberry, locust, cherry, maple, buckeye, gum, poplar, and sycamore were interrupted by a number of ponds; one of these stretched from Sixth Street along Jefferson and Market to Sixteenth Street; it was "so deep that horses swam in it," writes Mr. Durratt, "and its bed is yet visible between Market and Jefferson streets"; the fish that swam in these ponds were of benefit to the pioneers, who subsisted to a more or less extent upon them; on the other hand, the ponds were detrimental to the health of the citizens and Louisville early acquired the unfortunate reputation of being an unhealthy place.

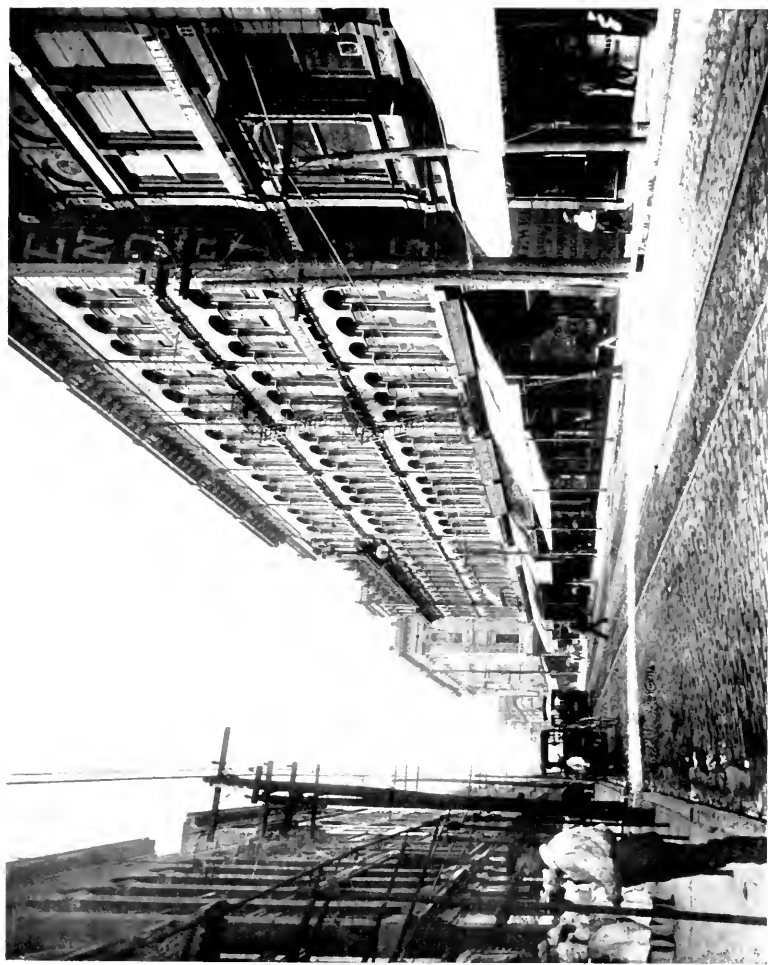
The most fatal complaint [writes Dr. M'Murtrie in 1819] among adults, (exclusive of small pox,) is a bilious remitting fever, whose symptoms are often sufficiently aggravated to entitle it to the name of *yellow fever*, and unless some speedy change be made in the internal regulations of the town, and an efficient police established, in room of the nominal one existing at present, that pestilent foe may be expected to make his appearance every summer, as a native born citizen of the place. It is vain and useless to talk of establishing lazarettoes and quarantines, to prevent the importation of this fell destroyer from abroad, while we are accumulating at home, the sources whence he springs. During the months of July, August, and September, so strongly are the inhabitants of this and the adjacent towns, *predisposed* to this disease, by the joint influence of climate, and the miasm of marshes, and decayed and decaying vegetable and animal matter, that they may be compared to piles of combustibles, which need but the application of a single spark to rouse them into flame! Let me not be accused of alarming people unnecessarily, for I write this under a solemn conviction in my own mind, that unless greater attention be paid to *cleanliness*, in every possible way, Louisville cannot long escape a signal visitation from this destroying angel. I have

repeatedly seen sporadic cases of it, but fortunately at a time of year when there existed the least danger of its spreading. To affirm that Louisville is a healthy city, would be absurd, but it is much more so than the thousand tongues of fame would make us believe, and as many of the causes which prevent it from becoming perfectly so, can be removed, a few years hence may find the favorable alterations accomplished, and do away the general impression of its being the grave-yard of the western country.

In 1779 a blockhouse and eighteen log cabins of Clark's men on Corn Island contained the two score of inhabitants of infant Louisville. In 1780 the population was probably upwards of one hundred. On May 1st of this year a petition signed by thirty-nine residents was presented to the Legislature of Virginia, asking that the land patented by Dr. John Connolly<sup>1</sup>—who had remained faithful to his British King—be confiscated then and there—be confirmed by the State. The Legislature granted the petition and passed an act appropriating one thousand acres of Connolly's land for the town of Louisville. The nine original Trustees of the town were John Todd, Jr., Stephen Trigg, George Meriwether, George Slaughter, John Floyd, William Pope, Andrew Hines, James Sullivan, and Marsham Brashears.

In 1783 Daniel Broadhead opened the first dry-

<sup>1</sup> "Dr. John Connolly, who was the first owner of the land on which our city was laid out, must always be an interesting character to Louisvillians. He was a bold, shrewd, and unscrupulous man; but neither for these nor for any other qualities can his connection with the origin of the city of Louisville be ignored. He was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, toward the middle of the last century, and at an early age became connected with the Royal troops as Surgeon's Mate. For this service he was given two thousand acres of land, which he located at the Falls of the Ohio. He was an intriguer by nature, and when Lord Dunmore placed him in charge of Fort Pitt he soon got into quarrels which led to the Indian troubles of 1774 and the battle of Point Pleasant. In 1775 he undertook to organize a band of Indians, renegades, and Tories, to be called the 'Loyal Foresters,' to be used against the revolting Colonies in the West. He was arrested near Hagerstown, while on his way to the



A View in Louisville, Kentucky





goods store at Louisville in a double log cabin, with puncheon floor and board roof, on the north side of Main Street between Fifth and Sixth; the proprietor's only opposition in the business was from John Sanders who anchored his flatboat in the Ohio at the corner of Third and Main streets and turned it into a store. The foundation of the tobacco industry of Louisville was laid soon after the establishment of the town, for in 1795 an act was passed suppressing the tobacco warehouse owned by Colonel John Campbell in Shippingport and establishing in its place a new one located near the mouth of Beargrass Creek, where inspectors were to be appointed by law and their inspections governed by law. From this time, therefore, we may date that policy which, protected by law and conducted on sound business principles, has made Louisville the largest and most important of tobacco markets—a market in which no less than seventy thousand hogsheads of leaf tobacco are now annually sold. At about the same time the Trustees issued regulations concerning the navigation of the "Falls"; what was known as a Falls Pilot was established, Captain James Patton being the first man to hold this office and to officially take a boat through

West to execute his plans with his instructions from Lord Dunmore concealed in the handle of his portmanteau. He was imprisoned and kept confined until the Revolutionary War was nearly at an end. Under pretence of looking after his lands at the Falls of the Ohio, he was in Kentucky in 1788, and conferred with some of our leading citizens about help from Great Britain for the Kentuckians to take the Spanish possessions at the South and open the navigation of the Mississippi River. He was one of the best informed men of his times about western lands, and had in mind the seating of a colony in this region, with the Falls of the Ohio as headquarters. It was with this view that he located his two thousand acres at the Falls. Lord Dunmore was his strong friend, and there is no calculating what he might have accomplished had not the Revolutionary War broken up his far-reaching and deep-scheming plans."—*The Centenary of Louisville*.

the rapids. Louisville had its first policemen in 1810; two men at a salary of \$250 per year was the beginning of the police department which now costs Louisville about one hundred thousand per year. The first street was paved in 1813, being Main Street from Third to Sixth. It is interesting that the Trustees of Louisville managed the city for half a century lacking two years and all the laws asked of the Legislature "would not cover the space upon the statutes book of a few ordinary Amendments to a modern charter." The last act of the Legislature during the rule of the Trustees was the addition of Preston's tract—one thousand acres to the limits of the city. The first brick house was built in 1789, the bricks coming on a flatboat from Pittsburg. The first newspaper, *The Farmers' Library*, was issued by Samuel Vail in 1801, being succeeded in 1808 by *The Louisville Gazette*. A Catholic church was built in 1811, followed by a Methodist church in 1812, the First Presbyterian Church in 1816, and Christ Church, Episcopal, in 1825.

For some time after the founding of the city lots on the principal streets sold from \$700 to \$1400; the price did not advance materially until 1812 when a branch of the State Bank of Kentucky was established; lots then sold at upwards of five thousand dollars each. "Owing, however," wrote Dr. M'Murtrie in 1819, "to the pressure of the times from banks, rag-money speculators, shavers, *et id omne genus*, property has lately declined in value, and will continue to do so until it sinks to a reasonable and proper level."

"The Falls of the Ohio," which had been the making of Louisville, contributed very largely to its growth of population and commercial advance. This was as

true in the days of the barge and keelboat as in the latter day of the steamboat. Mr. Cassady informs us that during the three months ending July 18, 1814, there arrived at the port of Louisville twelve barges of 524 tons burden, and seven keelboats of 132 tons burden; and that the following "is a manifest of cargoes delivered by these boats during that period":

813 bales Cotton,	438 hhds. Sugar,	5 bbls. Molasses,
26 bbls. and kegs fish,	1267 bbls. Sugar,	128 bbls. Coffee,
28 cases Wine,	12 Boxes "	389 bags "
1 bbl. "	1 bbl. Fish Oil,	5 cases Preserves,
1 bag and 1 bbl. Allspice,	2 bags Pepper,	29 bbls. Indigo,
6 ceroons Cochineal,	28 bales Wool,	2 ceroons "
1 demij. and 1 bbl. lime juice,	21 " Hides	6 tons Logwood,
1 Bale Bear Skins,	453 " " dry,	18 000 lbs. pig cop'r
28 boxes Steel,	1 bbl. Rice,	1 box Crockery.

The probable value of these articles was estimated at \$266,015.

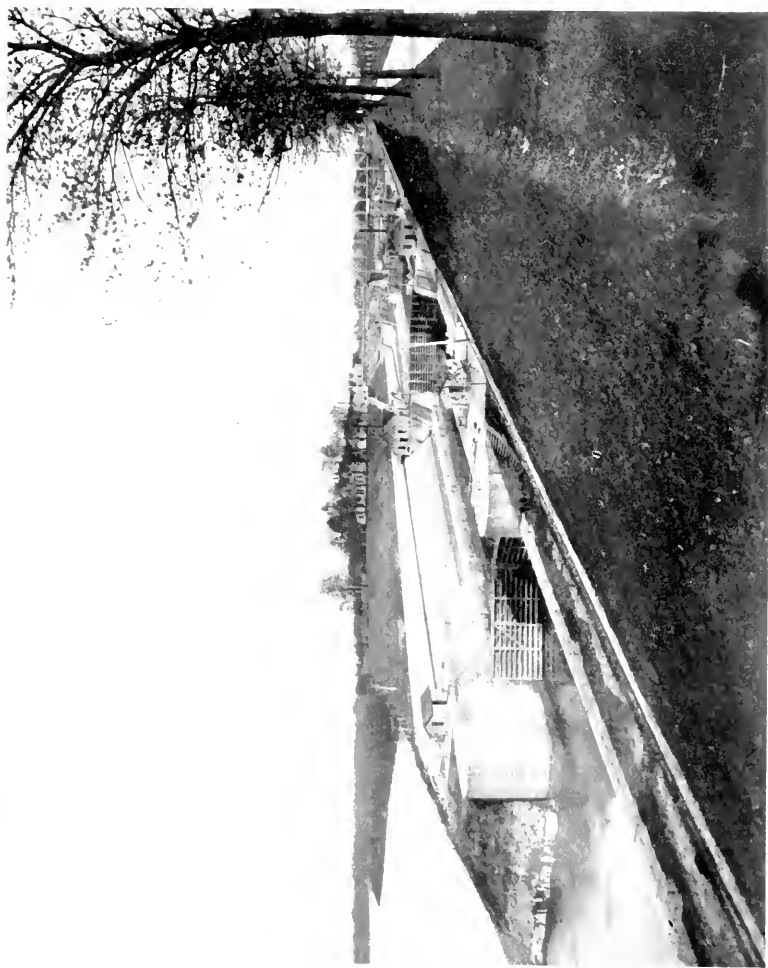
Louisville's reputation as a liquor emporium was established early in its history, and it is of particular interest that a company of Yankees incorporated by Kentucky in 1816, as the "Hope Distillery" company with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, erected a plant as gigantic in its proportions as the ultimate failure of the same was memorable. It was supposed that Louisville could sufficiently command the grain fields of the Ohio, Kentucky, Scioto, and Miami rivers to keep a great distillery supply, and that everything being done on a large scale, expenses would be lessened and the proceeds proportionately increased.

My feeble voice [wrote Dr. M'Murtrie far back in 1819] can be but of little utility, in preventing the erection of such gigantic reservoirs of this damning drink! I cannot, however, conclude the subject without hinting to those instrumental thereto, that they are mere manufacturers of *poison* for the human race, by no means slow in its operation, and so much

the more dangerous as it is enticing.—But, alas! of what avail are the reasonings of the philanthropist, or the entreaties of humanity, in opposition to the commands of interest? They are as chaff before the whirlwind.

The population of Louisville in 1800 was 600; in 1810, 1300; in 1820, 4000; in 1830, 10,000; in 1840, 21,000; in 1850, 43,000; the valuation of property at these same dates was: 1800, \$91,000; 1810, \$210,000; 1820, \$1,600,000; 1830, \$4,300,000; 1840 (largely fictitious), \$13,000,000; 1850, \$13,300,000. Louisville now covers an area of twenty square miles and contains a population of about a quarter of a million; its net public debt is \$8,700,000 and the assessed value of its taxable property is \$132,000,000, with the tax rate of 1.86.

The wealth of surrounding wheat fields and stock-yards has been the making of the splendid city in our day, as the "Falls of the Ohio" were the making of it in the old times. During the ordinary stage of water these rapids, to which it is believed the bold La Salle came in the seventeenth century, are the only obstruction in the entire Ohio River. When the river was low a portage around the falls from Louisville to Shippingport, as the town below the rapids is known, was necessary, for the "Falls of the Ohio" were navigable for boats of any size only about a fourth of the year. At a very early day plans were considered for building a canal on the course of this portage path. This is said to have been, as will be noted, one of the projects of the enterprising Burr when he entered the Ohio Valley in 1806. In fact a company was incorporated by the Legislature of Kentucky to cut a canal around the falls in 1804, but the project languished for some years. It



A Lock on the Portland Canal, Louisville, Kentucky.



is interesting to find that many looked with disfavor upon the canal, believing that Louisville owed her birth and growth to obstruction of navigation at that point; and when the canal was being built, the wagoners and cable drivers, who had made a living in the carrying trade across the two-mile portage, raised as long and bitter a cry as the teamsters who traversed the old path through the pine woods between Schenectady and Albany, in New York, were raising at the same time over the building of the Erie Canal. The Louisville teamsters even said that General Clark located the city at that point for the purpose of enabling them to haul passengers and freight around the Falls!

The building of this canal was, however, of as great national as local importance, and in 1810, the United States government authorized a national subscription of \$150,000 toward the capital stock of what should be known as the Ohio Canal Company, on condition that the company raised an equal sum for the work. In 1815, Kentucky asked the interested States to subscribe for shares in the canal company, Kentucky having taken a thousand at fifty thousand dollars and reserved a thousand more for her further disposal. The Ohio Canal was planned on the Kentucky side and the whole project was overturned by a rival plan of building the canal on the Indiana shore; parties went so far as to incorporate the Indiana Canal Company. The rivalry aided by misrepresentation and arguments, delayed the work, but in 1825 the Louisville and Portland Canal Company was organized, the capital stock being taken by not less than seventy persons in Kentucky, Ohio, Missouri, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland; 1665

shares were issued to private individuals, while the United States government took 2335 shares at a thousand dollars per share. It required five years of hard work to build the canal and an expenditure of \$750,000, but ten days before the end of the year 1830, the steamboat *Uncas* sailed from Louisville to Portland, a port at the lower end of the canal. During the year 1831, 416 boats, 46 keelboats, 357 flatboats, in all 76,000 tons, passed the locks of the Louisville and Portland Canal.

From a financial standpoint the canal was a great success—in fact one of the greatest “grafts” of the “good old days.” The charges imposed on passing boats were enormous; a \$25,000 boat of three hundred tons plying between the upper and lower Ohio for five years would spend an amount equal to her cost in lockage at Louisville. “A boat of 190 tons,” wrote the citizens of Cincinnati to Congress in a *Memorial* of 1844, “owned at Cincinnati has been in the habit of making her trips from this city to St. Louis and back in two weeks, and has passed the canal *four* times in one month. Her toll each trip, was \$114.00, and her toll for each month was \$456.00 or at the rate of \$5,472 per year, which is nearly half the value of the boat.” In twelve years 14,000 steamboats passed through the canal, together with about 5000 keelboats and flatboats; the total tonnage was about 28,500,000 tons, and a million and a quarter dollars had been expended in tolls. In these years the dividend declared on the stock owned by the United States government was more than its total original investment. The other stockholders had their proportion of the proceeds of this notorious monopoly. In our





City Hall, Louisville, Kentucky.



day when the cry of monopolies rings loudly over the land it is interesting to read of this "hold-up" proposition in which the United States government held two thirds of the stock.

The new Louisville and Portland Canal was built in 1872, and in response to a vigorous demand on the part of the public the canal was purchased by the government in 1874. The total cost of the canals, old and new, was about four and one half millions. The canal is now a free canal. From 1886 to 1901, 14,000,000 of tons of freight passed through it; during the past year the traffic tonnage was about a million and a half.

## Chapter XII

### Blennerhassett's Isle de Beau

THE largest island in the Ohio River lies a mile below Parkersburg, W. Va., and the mouth of the Little Kanawha River. From the beginning it has borne several names but for the last hundred-odd years it has borne but one, the ill-fated name of Blennerhassett.

The romantic tragedy of Blennerhassett Island has been given to the world on a thousand pages; and while it would be inappropriate not to sketch it here again, we will do so with a purpose not before essayed—that of allowing the romance to interpret certain of the phases of the history of the Ohio River which have been treated in preceding pages. The real story, shorn of its glittering, tinselled fabrications, contains an object-lesson in western history that has been ignored in inverse ratio to its inherent value. The romantic and unusual features of the story serve the admirable purpose of embalming and saving a number of facts and suggestions that enable us to form a more perfect picture of the Ohio Valley in the first decade of the nineteenth century than is possible in the case of any other single historical episode.

The story of Blennerhassett Island, for instance, illustrates the experiences of an emigrant in making a pioneer settlement in this valley; again, it shows the

character of the political unrest in the day before any real unification of the West and the East had dawned; it illustrates that fervent, lawless type of patriotism with which the first western settlers were sternly imbued; it is full of help in making us able to understand to some degree the nature and passion for land speculation, the rowdy element in the valley, the flatboat days, the character of the infant Ohio Valley settlements, in short, the whole of the rude conditions of the life of the times.

Those who have followed the present record thus far can very well appreciate that all land in the valley had been "taken up" somewhat before the end of the eighteenth century; all the land on the Virginia side had been claimed, probably, by 1780,<sup>1</sup> and, beginning with the Marietta and Cincinnati settlements in 1788, the Ohio and Indiana shore was doubtless in some settler's or speculator's hands by 1796.

In that year the Irish *émigré* whose name will forever be remembered in the West came to America. Harman Blennerhassett was descended from the choicest Irish stock; his blood could be traced back to the times of King John. He was one of three sons born to noble, wealthy parents residing at Conway Castle, Kerry County, Ireland. The year of his birth is in dispute, but it is sure that it fell in the year 1764 or 1765 at Hampshire, England, where his mother was visiting. As the youngest son he was destined to learn a profession and his education was well attended to.

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1773 William Crawford wrote George Washington, "All the land on the Virginia shore of the Ohio worth anything is already surveyed."—C. W. Butterfield, *The Washington-Crawford Correspondence*, pp. 39; 42. We have seen (p 97) that Washington left record in 1770 that the Virginian pioneers were expected to reach the Great Kanawha by 1771.

When young he was placed in the celebrated school at Westminster, England, and later he entered Trinity College, Dublin, from which he was graduated, sharing honors with his lifelong friend, the distinguished Irish patriot and orator, Thomas Addis Emmet. Leaving Trinity, Blennerhassett continued his law studies at King's Inn Courts, Dublin, and was admitted to practise at the Irish bar in 1790. He rounded out his education by a continental tour, visiting the Netherlands and arriving in France in the summer of 1790, at the period when that nation had been rocked in the arms of revolution. This revolutionary spirit was quickly imbibed by a disciple of Rousseau and one thoroughly acquainted with Voltaire, and Blennerhassett returned to his native country with a feeling of genuine sympathy for republicanism. But he cared not for political or social honors and strove to keep aloof from all party affiliation. The quiet and retirement for which he yearned was sought for in vain in a country thoroughly awakened to revolt, so he disposed of his estate and started for Kingsdale where his sister, the wife of Baron de Courcey, resided.

Although Blennerhassett was closely allied to the nobility of Ireland and England he looked with longing toward the free America which had but recently shaken off the identical yoke under which his mother-country—Ireland—was now groaning, and he made haste to England where he completed preparations to transfer his property to America. His estates had yielded him a fortune of one hundred thousand dollars. A share of this was invested in a library and chemical and philosophical apparatus. At this time Blennerhassett was married to Miss Agnew, daughter of the Lieutenant-



Harman Blennerhassett.  
From a miniature taken in Europe about 1795.



Mrs. Blennerhassett.





Governor of the Isle of Man, and granddaughter of the celebrated General Agnew who fell at the battle of Germantown, much against the wishes of her parents who practically disinherited her for the act. Being endowed with a surprising degree of energy and of a romantic nature however, Mrs. Blennerhassett listened, with delight, to his tales of the far-off America and did not hesitate to link her destiny with his; alienated from her home the prospect of emigration came as a relief so with wife, library, and apparatus, Blennerhassett; set sail for New York in 1796. During the several months that the couple remained in New York they were received by the first American families—"more in a parental and brotherly way than in a manner you would call polite and elegant," as he wrote to England. But Blennerhassett had not come across the waters to seek social distinction, and the reports of the quiet, fertile country west of the Alleghenies, where "first families" and social distinctions were not known, were more alluring to him than anything New York had to offer; so, in company with his wife, Blennerhassett set out westward. After a tedious trip they reached Pittsburg in the fall of 1797, and at once embarked in a keelboat for Marietta—the oldest and one of the most important towns on the Ohio. Here they spent the winter of 1797 and 1798, feeling much at home amid the general culture and intellectuality of the Marietians, the descendants of the sturdy, puritanical stock of Massachusetts and Connecticut. They decided to abandon their former plan of looking for land in the States of Kentucky and Tennessee and resolved to locate amid this enterprising settlement.

Lacking any complete information on the subject,

there is no ground for speculating on the practicability of Blennerhassett's plan of removal to America or of his adventuring into the Ohio Valley. The moment, however, that he arrives here and begins the work of selecting and building a home we are forced to the conclusion that he was everything that a level-headed, practical man could not be. It is as difficult for the fair-minded student to retain any respect for the Irish immigrant as it is to treat respectfully some of the commonly accepted accounts of those who have written most about him. The most absurd stories have been circulated by writers; some of these have been, seemingly, as gullible as was Blennerhassett when they say he paid a laborer five times the rightful price for collecting mussel-shells along the shore of the Ohio because the man averred he had to dive into fifteen feet of water to gather them! Several such chroniclers assert that Blennerhassett could repeat the entire *Iliad* "in the original Greek."

In casting about for a "seat" the immigrant at first chose the beautiful height known to-day as Harmar Hill which overlooks the Ohio and Muskingum at Marietta. The difficulty of access, however, is given as his reason for a change of plan. It is doubtful if that was the real reason, because he immediately chose another site infinitely more difficult, the island twelve miles below Marietta which will ever bear his name. The chimerical nature of the island proposition seems to have fascinated the eccentric young man—for he was hardly out of the twenties at the time. The island in question bore the name of Backus from its owner, Elijah Backus of Marietta, editor of the *Ohio Gazette* and the *Territorial and Virginia Herald*. It has been said that Washington, in his tour of 1770, included this



Blennerhassett's "Isle de Beau"



island in one of his "tomahawk claims," but this is only a rumor; the island, though the largest in the river, is not mentioned in his journal of his trip.<sup>1</sup> It was patented in 1786 by Alexander Nelson, Governor Patrick Henry signing the patent. Mr. Backus purchased it in 1792 from one James Heron (agent?), paying \$883.33 for the 297 acres it contained. Blennerhassett bought a one hundred-and-seventy-acre tract (the upper end of the island), paying four thousand five hundred dollars for it—truly an enterprising Yankee bargain! What had been an old blockhouse cabin during the Indian War stood on the portion that Blennerhassett bought, and, in 1798, the year of the purchase, the immigrant, wife, and servants, moved into these temporary quarters.<sup>2</sup>

Backus Island was as picturesque to the eye as it was impracticable for a homestead at that time<sup>3</sup>; its beauty entranced the idealistic immigrant, who named it *Isle de Beau*; yet he could have gone only half that distance from Marietta and found as beautiful a location and one far more accessible. Also, in descending the Ohio to these island acres, he quite passed out of the range of convenient intercourse with the New Englanders among whom (his biographers affirm) he was disposed to associate, and became a citizen of Virginia. It is probable, however, that the Blennerhassetts were decidedly inclined toward the social caste of the slave

<sup>1</sup> See pages 96-98.

<sup>2</sup> Our facts are drawn largely from the most extensive account of Blennerhassett Island in print, namely, Alvaro F. Gibbens's *Historic Blennerhassett Island Home* (Parkersburg, 1899).

<sup>3</sup> The island to-day is sometimes entirely submerged at flood-tide to the depth of fifteen feet; and the floods of to-day surely are not much greater than those of a century ago.

State than otherwise. It seems, therefore, that they did not at all pause here on the Ohio because of the New England settlement, but simply because they decided they might go farther and fare worse. At the price, and under the circumstances, *Isle de Beau* assumes the gorgeous tints of a golden brick—without straw.

The lack of straw becomes plain in a short space of time. Between 1798 and 1800 a mansion was built by Colonel Jos. Barker, a resident on the Muskingum near Marietta, and in the building of it the young couple were exceedingly happy.

To this accomplishment [writes the island's historian, Mr. Gibbens] many hands were requisite, in addition to the contractors, house-carpenters and the laborers, the ten negro servants he had purchased as grooms, waiters and watermen. Forest trees, the growth of years innumerable<sup>1</sup> were uprooted, boughs and trunks burned or conveyed away, and the inequalities of ground surface were smoothed and changed in accordance with artistic taste. The giant trees, save here and there reserved ones, together with underbrush which might obstruct the delightful view to the traveller descending Ohio's current, were removed from the broad front of the upper portion of the sand-pebbled gently-sloping head of the island. Elms, sycamores, and cottonwoods were sacrificed 'neath the strokes of the woodman's axe, that better, grander view might be had of the palatial mansion, which he had painted an alabaster whiteness.

Colonel Joseph Barker, of Marietta, who, a few years after, in 1803, built a brigantine and named it *Dominic*, for Blennerhassett's oldest son, was the principal architect of this uniquely planned residence of costly beauty. An exterior view is given in the cut presented. Springing up at that era of primitive cabins, in almost a wilderness, which had just emerged from the perils of Indian warfare and the presence of ferocious game, it was like a creation of magic, a revelation of paradise in a

<sup>1</sup> The island contains some magnificent specimens of sycamores to-day; one of these measures close to the ground, over forty-five feet in circumference.

"boundless contiguity of shade" and unadorned nature. The cost of the princely building, remote from the marts of industry and art, was, it is said, in excess of a half hundred thousand dollars. The exterior improvements of walks, lawns, shrubbery, orchards, flowers and clearing of an hundred acre farm below the structure, doubtless added ten thousand more, the entire expenditure of which among farmers, mechanics and laborers was an appreciated benefit where money was scarce and opportunities to earn it few indeed.

No expense was spared in the construction and decoration, which might impart splendor, usefulness, or convenience. The main building fronted the east and was two stories high, fifty-two feet in length and thirty feet in width. Across the front a deep portico extended, and thence on either side in circular wings, single stories forty feet in length, connected the principal or centre building with buildings on the north and south sides, each also facing the east, and being twenty-six feet in length and twenty feet in depth and two stories high. The entire structure formed half of an ellipse, with frontage of one hundred and four feet, exclusive of the circular porticoes, or promenade extensions. The right hand wing was used for library, philosophical apparatus, laboratory and study; the left appropriated to an occupancy by the servants. The united taste, culture and consultation of the Blennerhassett pair brought finishing, furnishing and furniture of every apartment in harmony and unison with a matured plan and ideal. The furniture, the best, latest and richest, in every room, was brought from the East by wagon, through Pittsburg, and thence down the Ohio by barge and keel, and was selected to please the eye and add luxurious comfort and convenience to family and numerous guests.

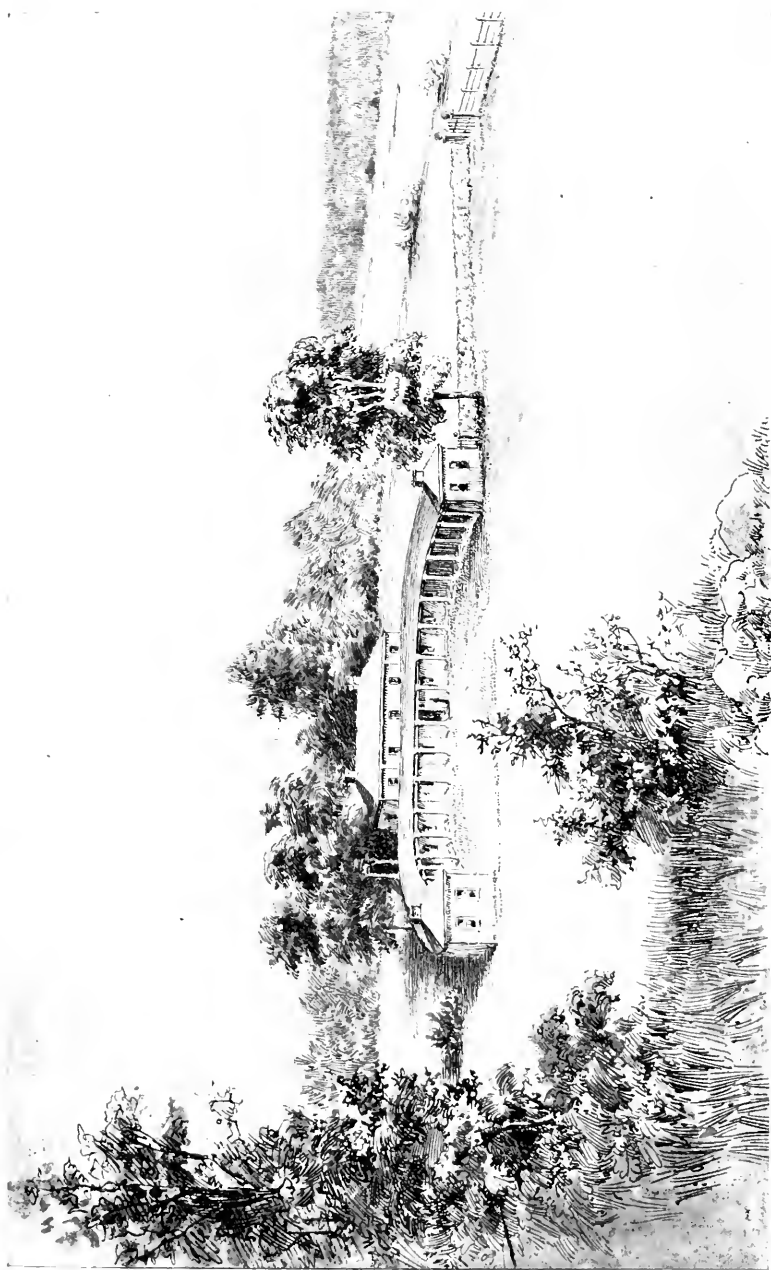
The hall, a spacious room, was painted sombre color, with cornice of plaster, bordered with moulding of gilt, extending around the lofty ceiling, with rich, heavy furniture to correspond. The drawing-room contrasted with the hall in having furniture light in hue and structure, and elegant, with gay carpets splendid mirrors, rich curtains, classic pictures and artistic ornaments. The side-boards—with decanters and wine glasses,

indispensable to Virginia hospitality in early times—were graced, as were the tables, by a liberal supply of silverware. The finest taste in all the interior, as well as beauty of the exterior surroundings, indicated the refinement of owner and hostess, and the possession and enjoyment of the finest estate in the Virginia section of the Western world, compensated them partly for the absence and immigration from associates and heritage in the older land across the wide, wide sea.

Passing, the question whether this description is overdrawn, there is no question but that every description of its mistress is fairly true to life. Mrs. Blennerhassett, perhaps more graceful than beautiful, was fit to rule in the best mansion in the West. To her outward charm of manner there was added much faith and devotion, in small things as well as in great, to her family and its best interests. She was a brilliantly active girl; and if one prefers to believe that she cleared “a five-rail Virginia fence at a single bound” as infrequently as her husband repeated the entire *Iliad* in the Greek, it will not be questioned that she was a marvelously good and sweet mother, hostess and friend. The late Maria P. Woodbridge of Marietta has asserted that Mrs. Blennerhassett, for instance, “introduced vaccination in the West. In New York her children were vaccinated. She preserved the virus, invited parents to send their little ones to the island, and successfully performed the operation. One of the children long recollected the beautiful Mrs. Blennerhassett. Admiration, love and respect and sympathy are felt for her as we follow her changing life from happy gaiety to lonely death in a New York garret.”<sup>1</sup> One of the Blennerhassett children, Dominic, was born

<sup>1</sup> “The Latter Days of the Blennerhassetts,” *Lippincott's Magazine*, Feb., 1879.





The Blennerhassett Plantation.

Redrawn from an old print.



in the blockhouse in 1799; a second, Harman, Jr., was born in the newly completed mansion in 1801.

For six years the life of the Blennerhassetts was, seemingly, very happy; if their island was not the Eden so many have pictured it, there are few hints of the sad ending of the strange drama—though the fickle husband was ever an element of uncertainty. It was not at all out of the range of possibility that his head would be turned by almost any chance adventurer armed with both chivalry and sagacity.

Aaron Burr was such a man; and this Catiline of American politics wrought the ruin of this weak Irishman in a very short space of time. In 1805 Burr entered the Ohio Valley, lacking one year of being fifty years of age. He had run his meteoric course as Revolutionary soldier, member of New York House of Representatives, Attorney General of New York, Commissioner of Revolutionary Claims, Senator from New York from 1791 to 1797, Vice-President of the United States from 1801 to 1804, defeated candidate for Governor of New York, and murderer of Alexander Hamilton. So far as native ability, personal magnetism, and lack of conscience were concerned he was a great enough man to have been guilty of any of the crimes his fiercest enemies ever accused him of plotting; at the same time he was shrewd and brilliant and popular enough to have been able to escape conviction of any crime. We shall not attempt here to sound his unfathomable "designs" as he entered the Ohio Valley, but, rather, attempt merely to sketch his influence on the residents of Blennerhassett Island and the result.

Burr was ambitious and without financial resources. He was quite detested in the East and, in a like measure,

was idolized in the West. The entire West and South accepted the outcome of the Burr-Hamilton duel as honorable to all concerned, and extolled Burr in proportion as the East maligned him.<sup>1</sup> Failing in his ambition to become Governor of New York, Burr showed his prescience by turning his face westward. His political prestige gone, little was left to him—few friends and less fortune—unless it was in the West. So long as the reign of the rowdy and outlaw lasted there he had friends; and, so far as fortune was concerned, when all other enterprises failed, who could not launch a land company?

The nominal purpose of Burr's western tour was to see the country and interest people in an investment in land on the Washita, a tributary of the Red River. "His chief power," it has been said of Burr, "consisted in his skill in enlisting the good will and sympathy of those with whom he came into contact."<sup>2</sup> It seems, also, that there was a more or less well-defined arrangement between Burr and General James Wilkinson, Major-General of the United States Army, either to provoke an outbreak between Spain and the United States on the Mississippi, or at least to take advantage of an outbreak provided one should occur. The nature of this understanding was such that it was easy for any one, knowing about it, to infer that Burr and Wilkinson were not faithful to their country. What may have been only a speculation contingent on certain given developments came to be thought to be Burr's deeply

<sup>1</sup> "In the Far West beyond the Alleghenies and in some parts of the South, Burr gained a positive increase of popularity by the duel."—James Parton, *The Life and Times of Aaron Burr* (New York, 1860), 350.

<sup>2</sup> *American Cyclopaedia*.

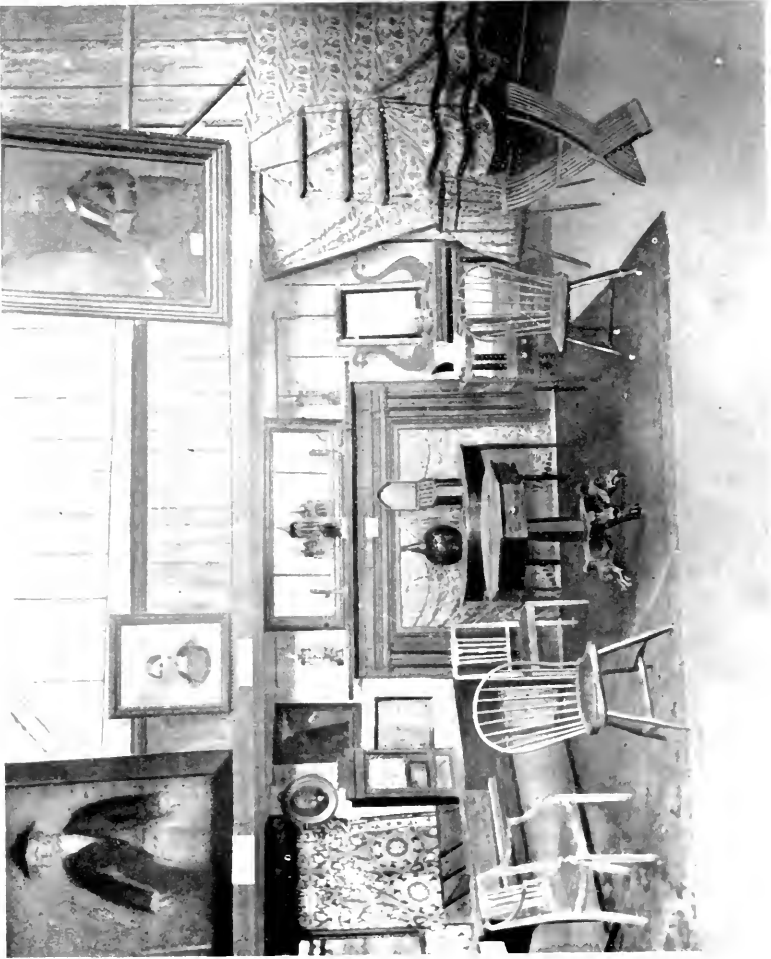
plotted act of treason. And the difficulty was, few men lived who could give Burr the benefit of any doubt. Suppose, for instance, that Burr planned a land investment on the Washita; the whole country at that time anticipated a war with Spain; it necessarily followed that all who were to be moved to invest money in the land enterprise must be made to see that the outbreak of such a war would be a benefit and not an injury. It was natural, therefore, that Burr should emphasize to all the military possibilities in such a case. His enemies were not slow to impute to him, justly or unjustly, a desire if not a determination to bring on the hostilities. They affirmed that he not only planned a war but fancied himself as conqueror of Mexico—and had more ground for their suspicion than they ought to have had.

But to make dark puzzle blacker still, the unsettled political status of the West at that time was dangerous enough without the appearance of any mysterious plotter on the stage. When rivers were the sole avenues of trade there was little commercial affinity between the metropolis of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and those of the Hudson and Potomac, and commerce often determines boundary lines. This we have emphasized sufficiently to make the reader's imagination fully alive to the fate of the West should war be declared against Spain. Burr's far-reaching hatred of the reigning administration, his many prophecies of a dissolution of the United States as then constituted, made it a gigantic task to throw from his shoulders the stigma of actually plotting the disunion of his country.

Such was the status when Burr reached Pittsburg, where a boat had been prepared for him in advance.

It was the kind of house boat then called an "ark," sixty feet in length and fourteen feet wide; it contained four rooms, a dining-room, kitchen, and two bedrooms, all lighted by glass windows. One roof covered the apartments and served as a promenade deck. It is extremely unfortunate that the journal Burr kept during his tour was not preserved as it would give much interesting information of the Ohio Valley at this early date. Touching at Wheeling and Marietta he recorded that the citizens of the former village seemed quite on a par with eastern villagers, and that many of the houses at Marietta would have been called handsome anywhere. At the latter point he made a tour of the celebrated mounds, and concerning them he records that he found it difficult to reach any satisfactory conclusion—practically agreeing with the opinions of our latest and most accurate scholars.

Dropping down the river he moored his ark out of curiosity at Blennerhassett Island, having heard of the eccentric immigrant when at Marietta. While strolling on the island the strangers were seen by Mrs. Blennerhassett, who sent an invitation to them to come to the house. Burr in reply sent his card, politely declining the offer of hospitality. The lord of the manor being absent Mrs. Blennerhassett took it upon herself to entertain the distinguished traveller and went in person to present an invitation to dinner. This Burr accepted and remained through a pleasant evening at the mansion. At eleven o'clock the travellers again set sail. Burr, without seeing Blennerhassett, accurately took his measurement; he found the man but half satisfied with his island adventure and nearing the bottom of his pocket-book. Whether at this



Blennerhassett Furniture.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.



time he broached the subject of this intended land speculation to Mrs. Blennerhassett is very probable but not sure; that she herself was attracted to him strongly and was his true friend through all that followed is a matter of history.

Burr spent the memorable summer of 1805 in the South, sounding people of importance, fêted far and wide. In October he ascended the Ohio and paused once more at the island, Blennerhassett again being absent. Reaching the East he addressed his first letter to him in December.

It was a very innocent communication [writes Parton] though the contrary has been asserted. It began with regrets that he had not had the pleasure of meeting Blennerhassett at his home, and inquired when and where they could come together. Its main purport was that Blennerhassett was too much of a man to be satisfied with the commonplace delights of rural seclusion. He should aspire to a career in which his powers would be employed. His fortune, already impaired, would dwindle away gradually, and his children be left destitute. The world was wide, he should go forth from his enervating solitude in pursuit of fortune and of honor.

Whether Burr got his information of Blennerhassett's affairs directly from Mrs. Blennerhassett or from current rumor one cannot say. But the fact remains that there was the best foundation for his suspicion. Blennerhassett was already planning to make a change of residence. This is clear from letters written by him in this same month of December, 1805. In a letter to John Brown, then just settled on the lower Mississippi, Blennerhassett says: "The hints you have given of the predilection you entertain for your last chosen meridian, have kindled in our minds a fire of enthusiastic curiosity, which our *present*

*embarrasments* will constantly fan. . . . ” He then speaks of a commercial venture in company with Dudley Woodbridge of Marietta and refers to a necessary abandonment of books and science, “to which, I fear, the state of my affairs will henceforth, I know not how long, condemn me.” Six days later, December 15th, he writes a letter to General Devereux in which he speaks of the need of “selling or letting this place to effect a removal to another, where I could embark in mercantile pursuits, or the resumption of my old legal profession.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is only right to emphasize the fact of Blennerhassett's *purpose to leave the island, before Burr's "innocent" communication of early December reached him.* In all the literature of the subject there is not sufficient emphasis of this fact. It may be that in this decision Burr had a part, as he had twice been on Blennerhassett Island, but there is no proof of this.

Such being the case, and Blennerhassett being the vagary he was, this letter of Burr's, received in December, 1805, proved a trump card. The ground was fertile with strange possibilities; and Burr's seed was as timely as fate. In his reply to Burr, dated December 21st, the *émigré* states that he is compelled to give over the former hope of remaining on his island

where for eight years I have dreamed and hoped I should rest my bones forever, [and desired to go again] into active life, to the resumption of my former profession of the bar, mercantile or other enterprise, if I should find an opportunity of selling or letting my establishment here. . . . Having thus advised you [he continues] of my desire and motives to pursue a change of life, to engage in anything which may suit my circumstances,

<sup>1</sup> William H. Safford, *The Blennerhassett Papers* (Cincinnati, 1861), 111, 112.



Aaron Burr.  
From a steel engraving.



I hope, Sir, you will not regard it indelicate in me to observe to you how highly I should be honored in being associated with you, in any contemplated enterprise you would permit me to participate in.

Blennerhassett had, in the letter, received a substantial hint at the possible outcome of Burr's land speculation as shown by the following sentence:

Not presuming to know or guess at the intercourse, if any, subsisting between you and the present Government, but viewing the probability of a rupture with Spain, the claim for action the country will make upon your talents, in the event of an engagement against, or subjugation of, any of the Spanish Territories, I am disposed in the confidential spirit of this letter to offer you my friends, and my own services to co-operate in any contemplated measures in which you may embark. . . . I shall await with much anxiety the receipt of your reply. . . .

To be lenient where there is doubt it is safe to say that Blennerhassett was embarking in Burr's scheme because it was, in the main, in line with an earlier plan of his own. It seems that it did not occur to him that Burr might be promoting a land speculation chiefly because of a subtle ulterior motive. He was duped, as were hundreds of others. As the necessary preparations for a commercial venture (securing boats, provisions, and men) were exactly similar, in many respects, to the preparations for a campaign against the Spaniards, it was easy for the adroit fortune-seeker to hoodwink those who would not have engaged in his latter plan, and, at the same time, by hints and suggestions, incite those who would have relished it in the extreme.

For several months Burr's expedition delayed in proportion as the probabilities of a war with Spain decreased; he even sought, for the second time, an appointment from President Jefferson as late as April.

Failing in this he seems to have turned with energy sharpened by bitter anger to the western exploit, whatever it was, and now answered Blennerhassett's letter of December 21st of the year before, which he received in February. It had lain unanswered until now; and it is more than singular that the date of his reply (April 15th) and the date of which President Jefferson makes record in his "Anas" of Burr's second unsuccessful application for a diplomatic or other appointment, should exactly coincide! It is difficult for one not to feel a strong prejudice against Burr in his seeking an appointment from Jefferson after the western "exploit" had been proposed widely; it has every appearance of being a *dernier ressort* when other lines of activity were blocked.

From this on, there seems to be no pause in the movement of the pitiful tragedy. So far as Blennerhassett is concerned it all appears measurably clear, save for one feature to be mentioned in a moment. In July, 1806, Burr made his purchase of the Washita lands. The tract comprised four hundred thousand acres for which he was to pay forty thousand dollars; five thousand he paid down. His son-in-law, husband of the rare Theodosia Burr Alston, doubtless furnished the funds in part; a number of friends in the East aided. At this time war seemed very probable; "Never was an adventurer more sanguine of success than was Burr in July and August . . ." affirmed Parton; "the plot seemed well laid. The excellence of it was that *both his schemes were genuine*. He really *had* two strings to his bow. If war broke out, he would march into Mexico; if not, he would settle on the Washita; and wait for a better opportunity."

On the 29th of July Burr forwarded by the hand of his agent Swartwout the famous cypher letter to General Wilkinson; it reads as follows, the italics being the words Wilkinson erased when he turned State's evidence and divulged the plot:

*Your letter, postmarked 13th May, is received. At length I have obtained funds, and have actually commenced. The eastern detachments from different points, and under different pretences, will rendezvous on the Ohio, 1st of November. Every thing internal and external favors our views. Naval protection of England is secured. Truxton is going to Jamaica, to arrange with the Admiral on that station. It will meet us at the Mississippi. England, a navy of the United States, are ready to join, and final orders are given to my friends and followers. It will be a host of choice spirits. Wilkinson shall be second to Burr only, and Wilkinson shall dictate the rank and promotion of his officers. BURR will proceed westward 1st of August, never to return. With him go his daughter and grandson. The husband will follow in October, with a CORPS of worthies. Send forthwith, an intelligent friend with whom Burr may confer. He shall return immediately with further interesting details: this is essential to harmony and concert of movement. Send a list all persons known to Wilkinson west of the mountains, who could be useful, with a note delineating their character. By your messenger, send me four or five of the commissions of your officers, which you can borrow under any pretense you please. They shall be retained faithfully. Already are orders given to the contractor to forward six months' provision to points Wilkinson may name; this shall not be used until the last moment, and then under proper injunctions. Our project, my dear friend, is brought to a point so long desired. Burr guarantees the result with his life and honor, with the lives, and honor, and the fortunes of hundreds, the best blood of our country. Burr's plan of operation is to move down rapidly, from the falls, on the 15th of November, with the first five hundred or one thousand men, in light boats now constructing for that purpose, to be at Natchez between the 5th and 15th*

of December, there to meet *you*, there to determine whether it will be expedient in the first instance, to seize on, or pass by, Baton Rouge . . . on receipt of this, send Burr an answer, . . . draw on Burr for all expenses, etc. The people of the country to which we are going are prepared to receive us; their agents, now with Burr, say that if we will protect their religion, and will not subject them to a foreign power that, in three weeks, all will be settled. The gods invite *us* to glory and fortune; it remains to be seen whether we deserve the boon. The bearer of this goes express to you; he will hand a formal letter of introduction to you, from Burr; he is a man of inviolable honor and perfect discretion, formed to execute rather than project, capable of relating facts with fidelity and incapable of relating them otherwise. He is thoroughly informed of the plans and intentions of —, and will disclose to you, as far as you inquire, and no further; he has imbibed a reverence for your character, and may be embarrassed in your presence; put him at ease, and he will satisfy you.<sup>1</sup>

On August 4th, Burr with Mrs. Alston and son set out for the West. From Bedford, Pennsylvania, he wrote Blennerhassett on August 15th that he would reach him on the 23d or 24th of that month. As he forged westward he seems to have spread everywhere the seeds of sedition; diverging north and south from his direct course he met many people and talked to each as he felt would do most good; to one he would emphasize the land purchase; with another the possibilities of war and glory; to another he coincided in despising the reigning government at Washington, though everywhere he made it appear that Jefferson's administration favored war with Spain, and everywhere spread the intimation that Burr's plan was secretly

<sup>1</sup> "The words in italics were stricken out, and, in some instances, supplied by others, in the copy which was presented to the Legislature of Louisiana by General Wilkinson, his reason for the alteration being to divert public suspicion from himself as being connected with Burr."—Safford, *The Blennerhassett Papers*, 169.





The Well on Blennerhassett's Island.

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avored by it. If in most instances he fed the right sauce to the right gander he made a mess of it in one staunch home in the "Monongahela country"—that of Colonel Morgan near Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. After talking freely to the Colonel's sons he descended from his chamber, when his host thought him abed, and broached the subject uppermost in his mind to the old Colonel. The latter's attitude gave the sharp Burr great reason to change the topic of conversation, which he quickly did. Morgan in consultation with others dispatched a letter to President Jefferson; this letter, Jefferson later said, gave him his first notion of Burr's real design.

Reaching Blennerhassett Island, the plan of operations was quickly rounded into shape. The land speculation was circulated as the real purpose, and all comers were to have one hundred acres of land as bounty for embarking. How much or how little Burr confided in Blennerhassett is not known. It has been said that the Irishman was kept in the dark so far as the larger dreams of the fortune-seeker were concerned. If such was the case how are we to explain the series of articles which the fluent pen of Blennerhassett now wrote, and which were published in the *Ohio Gazette* at Marietta under the *non-de-plume* of "Querist"? They present the view of a logical separation of the eastern and western States of the Union. Who can explain these literary productions, originating immediately after Burr's arrival, otherwise than as part and parcel with the plan of operations then outlined? To the present writer these articles form one of the strongest proofs of the treasonable influence exerted by Aaron Burr on the western people.

From this time on Burr and Blennerhassett were in close touch, the former securing men for the emigration, the latter preparing the boats and stores, and arranging his affairs before departing from his home. Burr made Kentucky his headquarters, but visited all the important western towns. Blennerhassett ran back and forth between Kentucky, the island, and Marietta. The expedition was to proceed in three divisions. One Comfort Tyler, from New York, was in command of boats to start at Pittsburg containing the emigrants of that region and the East. When this flotilla reached the island it was to be joined by Blennerhassett's boats, fifteen in number, then being built by Col. Jos. Barker on the Muskingum. The combined fleets were to be met by Burr's own boats (six) at the mouth of the Cumberland, these having been built and stocked at Nashville, for the payment of which Andrew Jackson held four thousand dollars of Burr's money. Burr hoped the expedition would get off by November 15th but was disappointed in this. On November 14th Tyler wrote Blennerhassett that he hoped to set sail by December 15th but that his "settlers" were late in arriving. He purposed being at the island by December 8th. By contract Blennerhassett's boats were to be ready December 9th. They were to number fifteen; ten were to be forty feet, and five fifty feet long; all were to be ten feet wide and two and one half feet deep, "after the Schenectady model, such as were used on the Mohawk river." A keelboat sixty feet long was to carry arms and stores; one of the boats was to be finished in the best of style for Blennerhassett's family; this was to have separate rooms, glass windows, and a fire-place. The boats



Public Buildings, Wheeling, West Virginia.



were to be provisioned with pork, bacon, flour, kiln-dried meal, whiskey, etc. The cost of the boats was two thousand dollars and the cost of the provisions an equal amount.

Little by little the suspicions of people were awakened by these preparations; Burr was accused in Kentucky of plotting disunion; Blennerhassett confidentially acknowledged the authorship of the "Querist" articles, and rumor ran riot in the neighborhood that Blennerhassett's boats were being built for treasonable purposes. An agent, one Graham, was sent westward by Jefferson on the receipt of Colonel Morgan's letter, who palmed himself off on Blennerhassett as an ardent Burrite and then hurried to Chillicothe, the capital of Ohio, with a clear idea of what Blennerhassett thought was on the tapis. As early as October 6th a mass meeting of the citizens of Wood County, of which Newport, now Parkersburg, W. Va., was the metropolis, was held for the purpose of protecting "the honor and safety of the settlers and their property, and to cause every person friendly to the Constitution of the United States to express their attachment thereto." Matters came to a crisis when, on receipt of information from General Wilkinson, who turned State's evidence, President Jefferson issued a proclamation on November 27th announcing that "unlawful enterprises were on foot in the western States . . . and commanded all officers, civil and military, to use their immediate and utmost exertions to bring the offending persons to condign punishment." The Ohio Legislature, December 6th, authorized the calling out of militia at Marietta.

The situation now presented is perfectly typical

of the Ohio Valley at this time, when this valley was "the West." There was the political rivalry, which Burr's friends, with Henry Clay at their head, soundly denounced as "persecution"—such as had driven him out of the East. The virulence of this political rivalry could not have been more bitter than here on the river that was the dividing line of Roundhead and Cavalier. Then there was the idle crew that Burr's agents had enlisted along the river, hot for this or any other adventure; a number of these were earnest, honest men but the rank and file were the rowdies with which the valley was infested and eager as Catiline's old tribe for "new things." With the overhauling of Burr in Kentucky and the issuing of Jefferson's proclamation, a wave of boisterous patriotism swept over the valley, inherently honest, although identified with half-ruffian hordes who made the pretence of preserving order an opportunity for riotous outlawry.

Jefferson's proclamation and the action of the Ohio Legislature December 6th came just in time to thwart Blennerhassett's plan of departure. Tyler, with only four boats and thirty-two men, reached Blennerhassett Island December 7th, but before Blennerhassett's own boats were completed they were seized by the Ohio militia. This adroit movement followed the arrival of Jefferson's proclamation. At Newport (Parkersburg) even a bolder measure was proposed; this was nothing less than the seizure of Blennerhassett and his men. Learning this fact the latter wrote hastily to Colonel Barker at Marietta for such of the boats as were completed. Finding these held by the State of Ohio, the baffled man, fully determined to escape the Virginia militia, prepared



to leave the island on the following night, December 10th.

His situation was now pitiable; many of those who had agreed to embark in the adventure were thunder-struck at the President's proclamation and its results; few of them, and those a most unreliable lot, remained steadfast in the adventurous plan. An episode of the hour is not without its significant, as well as humorous, aspects, in that day of rowdy and outlaw. A band of young men who were unmoved in their determination to follow the fortunes of the fleeing Irishman undertook to filch the appropriated flotilla of flatboats from the militia at Marietta. One boat was secured on the maraud, the militia succeeding in holding the remainder, and in this one boat, near midnight of December 10th, poor "Blanny," as he was locally known, set sail with Tyler's boats.

Mrs. Blennerhassett and children were left to come later in the family boat that was being built. For this boat Mrs. Blennerhassett made a hurried trip to Marietta on the following day and during her absence the horde of Virginia militia descended upon the island estate under the command of Colonel Hugh Parker. The commander, learning of Blennerhassett's flight, put off post haste "cross country" to head the boats at Point Pleasant. The militia, lacking the restraining hand of their leader, occupied the mansion like vandals and, filled with liquors there discovered, entered upon a disgraceful round of violence and destruction. This wantonness is described by two young men, Morgan Neville and William Robinson, who chanced to be passing down the Ohio and were arrested as accomplices, as follows:

On the 13th day of December 1806 the boat in which we were, was driven ashore, by ice and wind, on Backus' Island, about one mile below Mr. Blennerhassett's house; we landed in the forenoon, and the wind continuing unfavorable, did not afford us any opportunity of putting off until three o'clock in the evening, at which time we were attacked by about twenty-five men, well armed, who rushed upon us suddenly, and we, not being in a situation to resist the fury of a mob, surrendered; a strong guard was placed in the boat, to prevent, we presume, those persons of our party who remained in the boat, from going off with her, while we were taken to the house of Mr. Blennerhassett. On our arrival at the house we found it filled with militia; another party of them were engaged in making fires, around the house, of rails dragged from the fences of Mr. Blennerhassett. At this time Mrs. Blennerhassett was from home. When she returned, about an hour after, she remonstrated against this outrage on the property, but without effect; the officers declared that while they were on the island, the property absolutely belonged to them. We were informed, by themselves that their force consisted of forty men the first night; and on the third day it was increased to eighty. The officers were constantly issuing the whiskey and meat, which had been laid up for the use of the family; and whenever any complaint was made by the friends of Mrs. Blennerhassett, they invariably asserted that everything on the farm was their own property. There appeared to us to be no kind of subordination among the men; the large room they occupied on the first floor presented a continued scene of riot and drunkenness; the furniture appeared ruined by the bayonets, and one of the men fired his gun against the ceiling; the ball made a large hole, which completely spoiled the beauty of the room. They insisted that the servants should wait on them, before attending to their mistress; when this was refused, they seized upon the kitchen, and drove the negroes into the wash house. We were detained from Saturday evening until Tuesday morning; during which time there were never less than thirty, and frequently from seventy to eighty men living in this riotous manner entirely on provisions of Mrs. Blennerhassett. When we left the island,

a cornfield near the house, in which the corn was still remaining, was filled with cattle, the fences having been pulled down to make fires. This, we pledge ourselves to be a true statement of those transactions, as impression was made on us at the time.

In company with these young men Mrs. Blennerhassett set sail in a flatboat secured from A. W. Putnam of Belpre on the night of December 17th.

Blennerhassett escaped detection of guards both at Gallipolis and Point Pleasant. His boats passed the "Falls" at Louisville December 16th. On the 22d Burr came down the Cumberland with two boats. The combined flotilla numbered eleven boats, and an hundred-odd men. Fort Massac was reached December 29th and on the next day the Mississippi was entered. As is well known both Burr and Blennerhassett were brought to trial at Richmond, Virginia, and declared "not guilty" of treason as accused.

The island farm and home, despoiled and overgrown, was seized by Blennerhassett's creditors and when he returned a year later it was truly a "Deserted Isle" that welcomed the ill-fated man. The house had been gutted of its contents, the slaves had run away or been seized for debt. The boats that were completed on the Muskingum had been used as government transports for troops to St. Louis, the provisions had been sold by the government. Some of the older residents of the Muskingum valley can still remember when portions of some of Blennerhassett's uncompleted boats formed portions of farm buildings until the knives of relic-hunters demolished them.

Negligence of tenants, river freshets, and the rudeness of those in charge (who viewed it as public property) had rendered the building and surroundings

pitiable to behold; window casings had been torn out to procure the leaden weights by which the sashes were poised; the stone roller used to level the lawn and grounds was broken to obtain the iron axles on which it ran. Hemp and cordage machinery took the place of flowers and shrubbery.

Blennerhassett looked sadly upon the ruins of his once bright home, and returning to Natchez, purchased a plantation of one thousand acres, at St. Catherine, near Port Gibson, Claiborne County, Mississippi; on it he placed twenty-two slaves, and there, upon about two hundred acres, began the culture of cotton. The war with Great Britain, in 1812-15, occasioned an embargo and reduction of values, and the enterprise was abandoned. He sold the plant entire for twenty-seven thousand dollars, which scarcely satisfied his creditors.

He removed to New York, and attempted the practice of law. Not succeeding, he went to Canada in 1819, and there also failed in his purposes. Then he visited Ireland, his native heath, to prosecute a reversionary claim, but was barred by statute of limitations. During this absence of her husband, Mrs. Blennerhassett found a home in New York, and was financially assisted by the Emmets. She went then to Pennsylvania, where at Wilkesbarre, her sister, Mrs. Dow, resided. She next joined her husband in Montreal, and while there, in 1824, wrote for publication a volume entitled *Widow of the Rock and other Poems*. Among the productions of her pen while in Canada was the pathetic poem, *The Deserted Isle*. She died in New York and was buried in the "Marble Cemetery" on Second Street. Blennerhassett

died at Port Pierre, Isle of Guernsey, February 1st, 1831.

Before leaving the island with the flotilla, Blennerhassett had rented to Colonel Nathaniel Cushing, a friend in Belpre, the entire estate, crops, cattle, and agricultural utensils. He kept possession for two years, and it was then, on creditors' suits, taken out of his hands by the courts, and furniture and library under an attachment sold at auction for bills endorsed by Blennerhassett for Burr.

Joseph S. Lewis, of Philadelphia, a merchant, purchased the island in September 1817, after the failure, and destruction of the house and property. It passed into the hands of George Neale, Sr., and is now possessed by his daughter Alice and son-in-law Amos W. Gordon. It is a pleasure resort during the summer season. The old well is still in use, and some locust and other trees said to have been planted by Blennerhassett himself overshadow its moss-covered edges and its crystal waters that drop from the old oaken bucket. The caps of the stone gateway are shown in the steps of the present dwelling. On the fine grassy terrace where Blennerhassett was wont to promenade and repeat the entire *Iliad* in the original Greek, fierce baseball games are played on sunny Sunday afternoons, while the peanut vender hawks his ware and the "pop" bottles resound under the shade of the gigantic sycamores.

## Chapter XIII

### Where Yankee and Virginian Met

THE four "Yankee" towns, Marietta, Columbia, and Cincinnati in Ohio, and North Bend in Indiana, grew slowly but steadily; in the eyes of Virginians and Kentuckians it made no difference whether the newcomers were from New England or New Jersey; if they came across the mountains (and from north of Virginia) they were "Yankees." The promoters of both the New England and New Jersey land companies began selling lands to pioneers and up and down the Ohio and up both the Muskingum and the Miamis spread the offshooting colonies. The impetus given to emigration from New England and the entire seaboard by these settlements was considerable; converging on Pittsburg came thousands of easterners, some of whom came to the New England settlements but most of whom scattered up and down the Ohio River and into Virginia and Kentucky. They brought with them the best and the worst that New England had to give; as a rule they were a cleanly, pious, law-abiding people; their towns were (comparatively) model pioneer settlements; their inhabitants were educated and stood for social purity and advancement; moreover they were as a class possessed of keen business ability, quick to see a need and clever in their plans to meet it. They likewise possessed their

full share of the Puritanical narrowness of their forefathers; courteous and honest, they were apt to be caustic of those who failed to rise to their higher plane of moral and civic conscientiousness. They were respected wherever they went but were thought of as over-sensitive and critical.

As we have seen, the fighting Virginians, Irish, Scotch-Irish, and Germans, had opened the Ohio Valley, and for nearly a generation before the New Englanders arrived these rough but hardy pioneers had been filling the Old Southwest. That their hungry hatchets had not invaded the Old Northwest was no fault of theirs. What is now West Virginia and Kentucky contained a population of nearly 190,000 when the easterners arrived on the Ohio in 1788 and founded Marietta and Cincinnati. This large population had come mostly from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. To speak freely, this race of men was as uncouth and forbidding as the dark forests which it had wonderfully conquered; it was an ignorant race so far as books were concerned, and it did not name its settlements in honor of classic heroes; but as these rough men fought their way westward they had lost nothing of that generous spirit of southern hospitality with which many of them were born; and the hard conditions of frontier life had ingrained in them a common sympathy for others and a generous love to help those in distress. Their villages were squalid and unkempt but the stranger found a generous welcome there. Conquering the Ohio Valley had not made scholars and gentlemen of them in the polite sense in which these words are customarily used; as Roosevelt has beautifully said, they had need to be good and

strong—especially strong! Judged by the glorious work they had done they were heroes if ever heroes lived; judged by their beards and faces and their dooryards they were all their New England neighbors and visitors were quick to call them. And the fact remains that they are described in numberless volumes of travels in their true colors—that of the rich earth of the Ohio Valley. Nine tenths of these descriptions, while accurate as to squalor and filth, utterly neglect to give the conquerors of the Ohio Basin their due in the story of our national advance.

But the “Yankees” were not altogether lovely in the eyes of the first comers, who, for convenience sake, we may call the Virginians. Your “Long Knife” was disposed to ridicule much that was very worthy in the New Englander, and as for those characteristics which have made the Yankee a byword throughout the world, he was profanely antagonistic.

And so the neighbors of the ex-Revolutionary Yankees on the Ohio River were apt to minimize their honors.

Yesterday I was speaking rather harshly to a man who had not fulfilled an agreement with me to caulk my boat [wrote a sojourner at a “New England” town] when a gentleman came up and accosted him with “Ah, General, how do you do! I mean to dine with you. What’s your hour?” I made use of this opportunity to go on to the baker in pursuit of some biscuit. I found him at home. On seeing the bread I began to comment on the price and quality, and might have betrayed some little dissatisfaction and incivility, had not a third entered opportunely to say, “Colonel, I want a loaf of bread.” My next call was on a butcher, whose sorry dirty looking meat made me neglectful of my late experience and I raved without any consideration of propriety and decorum, till brought to a sense of misconduct and absence of breeding by a negro, who, taking me aside,





The Wharf at Evansville, Indiana.

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very kindly warned me that the *butcher* was a *judge*, and that he could fine folks for cursing and swearing. . . . I consulted my landlord, whom I found to be also a major in the late army. His lesson was short. "We majors, colonels, and generals," he said, "are so cheap and common here, that people don't mind us *no more than nothing*. Do you follow their example: live without restraint, and get your business done as though you were dealing with knaves, and the most common race of men. Our title signifies but little. For the most part it is used towards us from familiarity, derision and contempt. Those who *really* respect us, say Tom, Dick, or whatever else we may be called." "But the judge," said I, "how is he to be treated?" "When in his character of butcher," said the major, "he is treated rough enough, and without any ceremony; but when in court, and sometimes on Sundays, the citizens say 'Your honour,' and touch their hat!"

It must be remembered that there was in political circles at this early period a southern and a northern faction, the one led by Virginians and the other by New Englanders.

The Virginia party fear and hate New England [wrote Manasseh Cutler in 1815] whatever may be their political characters [affiliation]. It has been a common saying here [Washington] this winter that "There is no being in nature that a Virginian hates so much as a New England Democrat."

It was inevitable that if such was the antagonistic feeling in the nation at large, the immediate contact of the representatives of the two factions on the Ohio must have resulted in much bitter rivalry and odious comparison of forms of life and ideals. If Virginia *democrats* hated New England *democrats* they chanced to meet in Washington how would they relish one of the opposite political faith on meeting face to face in the Ohio Valley?

Thus as the nineteenth century dawned and advanced into its first and second decade we find the

remarkable scene in the Ohio Valley of the meeting and the mixing of the Puritan and the Cavalier, each bearing his notable earmarks however altered by circumstance and surroundings. And we see the decline of the one and the ascendancy of the other, as Indian fighting slowly gave way to a marvellous commercial awakening. In this awakening the scheming Yankee played his rôle and won his way; and the history of the Ohio Valley is filled to overflowing with stories of this ingenious people.

The Yankee was ever under suspicion and was believed to have an ulterior motive whether he spoke or whether he kept silence. This is illustrated in the case of the Dutch farmer who was overtaken on his way to mill by a traveller who soon inquired why he carried a stone in one end of his meal-bag.

"By schure," he replied, "do make de pag schteady."

"But that stone don't steady the load," insisted the newcomer; "throw it away and put half your meal on one side and half on the other."

With a "By jing" the farmer agreed that the plan was a good one and acted accordingly. Shortly after, the Yankee, tiring of the slow rate of speed maintained by the farmer, set out in advance with a kindly "Good morning." Not long after misgivings seized the Dutchman.

"By jing," he swore now, "it's all a tam yenky trick; effry pody in de klades garries their krice so, and dat fellar hash some getch in it." Whereupon he found another stone and rearranged his load as before. Thus was the Yankee ever suspected.

A typical Yankee pedlar came to the door of a western barber shop and inquired in a nasal tone:

"I calculate, Sir, I could n't drive a trade with you to-day?"

"I calculate you calculate about right," was the mimicking reply.

"Well, I guess you need n't get huffy about it," responded the Easterner hopefully; "now here's a dozen genuine razor strops worth two dollars and a half—you may have 'em—"

"I tell you I don't want any of your trash."

"Wal, now, I declare! I'll bet you five dollars if you make me an offer for them 'ere strops we'll have a trade yet."

"Done," replied the barber putting up the money; "I'll give you a picayune for the strops."

"They're yours," said the pedlar quietly laying them down, taking the picayune—and the stakes. The barber's countenance fell and the crowd jeered. Yet be it said to the credit of the pedlar that he did not retain his advantage. Returning the money he took back his wares. "There it is," he said as he gave back even the picayune; "a trade is a trade—and now you're awake in airnest; I guess the next time you trade with that 'pic' you'll do better than buy razor strops."

As debt collectors the sons of the rock-ribbed New England hills were noted for displaying their ingenuity in masterly ways. If one plan failed they were immediately on hand with another. It was for a genius only to collect the bill from the following "hard customer." The party in question had been owing a sum to his Yankee friend for nearly a year, regularly failing to take the duns that were sent to him seriously. At last he agreed to pay the bill on a given day in the

week following. Promptly on the day named the Yankee appeared in person to collect.

"You are very punctual," observed the debtor, wonderingly.

"I generally am in business matters," assented the visitor pleasantly. "In this case I had another reason for being so."

"Indeed," asked the querulous host, "and pray, what was that?"

"Why," replied the affable genius, "if a person were to set a day to pay me money, and I did not call, it would look as though I doubted whether he meant to give it to me; which," he continued with monumental blandness, "on the footing of friendship you and I are, would be absolutely an insult, don't you think so?"

"He opened his eyes and stared at me," said the collector, later, when telling of his record-breaking achievement, "to ascertain if I was quizzing him. But I was perfectly serious and probably looked so. He paid the debt, and I have not a shadow of a doubt I should have had to call twenty times more for it if I had not hit him so close."

In another instance, a gentleman who had a bill of one hundred dollars against a friend was advised to secure the services of a Yankee collector, who, he was assured, "could squeeze oil out of Bunker Hill." The case demanded heroic treatment and the Yankee was engaged on the condition that he receive one half the amount for doing the job. Some weeks later the collector and the creditor met.

"Look here," the former immediately exclaimed, "I had considerable luck with that bill of your'n."



Interior of a Modern Ohio River Floating Theatre.





You see, I stuck to him like a mad dog to the root of a tree, but the first week it wa'n't no sort of use at it; not a bit. If he was home, he was short; if he was n't at home I could n't get no satisfaction. By the by, says I, after going sixteen times, I'll fix ye; so I sat down on the doorstep all day and part of the evening, and I began airly next morning, and about ten o'clock he gin in. He paid me *my half*, and I gin him up the note."

"Yankee Tricks" is a common term [writes an old-time student of social conditions in *Cist's Miscellany*], for anything very smart, done in the way of trade, no matter in which of the States the doer was born. I approve of the old saying "Let every tub stand on its own bottom." I am no Yankee, but have been well acquainted with many of them in the way of business and friendly intercourse. They are generally pretty cute, cautious and saving men, though liberal promoters of charitable and public institutions, to which objects a single Yankee State (the old Bay) or perhaps the town of Boston only, has, within the last thirty years, given more than the whole of the States south of Mason and Dixon's line have done since their first settlement; and of what these have given, it is probable more than half was from Baltimore alone. Let any man take a journey south on a real good horse, and when he returns see if the beast he rides does not show he has been out-Yankeed. He is somehow or other induced to trade or swap till it ends in a bit of carrion, unless his good horse is stolen, for horse thieves are as plenty as he goes south, as they are scarce in the New England States. Jockeys are no doubt to be found in all the States. We have them in Ohio, but all that I have known came here from south of the line. . . . I was once riding with an esteemed friend, and we met with a man who had grossly cheated him. Said my friend to his brother Yankee "it is such rascals as you who when driven from home settle where you are not known, but are soon found out in your old dirty tricks, that forty or fifty miles round give a bad name to all New England." As to the dealers in horn gun flints and wooden nutmegs, I give

them up to be buffeted, though the nutmeg business was not so very bad after all. A country store-keeper who had dealt in the article, on being asked about it, said they were very pretty looking nutmegs—made he believed of saw-dust; that those made of sassafras were reasonably good but those of elm or beech “was n’t worth a curse.”

For pure sagacity no “Yankee trick” can surpass a certain deal in pork which once took place in Old Virginia, and while it is out of the range of the Ohio Valley the incident shows the character of some of the business relations between southerners and northerners which gained for the latter the intense enmity of the former. A Yankee skipper had unloaded his cargo of Hingham woodenware at a Virginia river port and determined to invest his money in a live-stock sale then being advertised. On the day named the sale began with an offering of hogs which were divided into three lots of seven hogs each. The terms were cash down for live weight, sinking the offal. Part of the drove were fine and fat; many of the others were so far under par that they could n’t “raise a squeal or grunt without laying down or leaning against the wall.” The first lot averaged near two hundred pounds, the next one hundred, and the remainder, say, fifty. The captain purchased one lot at seven dollars per hundred; the mate took another at one dollar per hundred, and a sailor took the leavings at fifty cents per hundred.

When delivery was made the captain, to the amazement of all, chose the seven lean kine. A surprised buckskin blurted out:

“My, Captain, what a d—d fool you are; don’t you know you’ve got the choice?”

“Yes, I do,” was the reply, “and I chose these

nice little roasters." The mate made choice of the next in size and the "leavings" fell to the sailor at fifty cents per hundredweight. And the Yankees sailed away. Had the choice been made according to ordinary methods the twenty-one hogs would have netted \$50.75; as it was they brought but \$24.50.

Pork being one of the staples of the Ohio Valley it is natural that the Yankee frequently showed his genius on a hog dicker. One of these masters of commerce was driving a fine lot of hogs from Hamilton to Cincinnati; by written contract they were to be sold to a certain dealer at a given price per pound. Finding, when within half a dozen miles of the city, that pork was commanding a much better price than he was to receive the drover scratched his head a few moments and then turned the drove into a field and set out rapidly for the city. Finding the prospective buyer he affirmed that he needed help to get the pigs to town, they were so wild and "ran so awfully fast." The dealer jumped to the conclusion that the pigs lacked in weight every bit that they gained in speed, and at once refused to send any help, thereby hoping to break the contract. With surprising equanimity the owner took him at his word and tore up their agreement. He then went back to his drove, got them to town next day, and sold them for a dollar more a hundred than the broken contract called for.

The matter of speed in hogs was not, it may therefore be assumed, a thing to be prized, as a pork dealer in Georgetown, D. C., once had forcefully impressed on his mind. He had bargained with a drover on Buck Creek, Ohio, "who had not been long from Yankee land," for a certain number of hogs. The

drover brought the hogs across the mountains and down the Potomac. The buyer was to take half the lot; accordingly the westerner stood in the middle of the Georgetown bridge (where the division was to be made) and had the hogs driven rapidly across. When exactly one half had passed on a hog gallop the Ohioan leaped down and headed off the remainder and went his way with them and the money. He was afterwards wont to say that a man in Georgetown, D. C., owned what was probably the swiftest lot of hogs in the United States, but as for him he had "rather have heft."

In deals of such character it was the "sharper" who was ever looking for a like trick to be turned on him. Thus, a certain pork dealer in making a contract for a lot of hogs for the next season took occasion to have an iron-clad, bomb-proof contract drawn up by a lawyer; every possible contingency was anticipated and provided for; the number of hogs was to be anywhere from one to five hundred; the weight was to average so and so, and delivery was to be made at a given time and place, and the drover was to receive twenty dollars for the delivery. The contract covered three foolscap sheets in fine writing; the lawyer's fee was commensurable. But when the season came around pork had jumped in price and it was impossible for the party of the second part to deliver the goods without loss. The iron-bound contract had but one weak spot—the number of the hogs. On the day appointed the drover appeared on time at the right place with the minimum number called for in the contract, one hog, and demanded the twenty dollars named as the price of delivery. The story

goes that however hard the cautious dealer sought a loophole of escape from paying the cash for delivery he found none, though the drover let him off finally with ten dollars.

How far these stories, and hundreds like them, can be said to represent the typical New Englander one cannot pretend to say. That he used less ingenuity in trade in the Middle West than elsewhere throughout the world we well may doubt. That his very clever ways won him the general dislike of his neighbors is clearly shown in a custom that is reliably said to have existed in the public schools of Cincinnati three quarters of a century, and less, ago. When a lad from the East came to school for the first time, he was subjected to a round of rough handling, not unlike "running the gauntlet"; and the ceremony was called "licking the Yankee out of him!"

But these two wonderful stocks of people should not be remembered by the lower and more unsavory traits. The best blood in New England went toward founding Marietta, Cincinnati, and Cleveland. And the Virginians who stepped rapidly into the Scioto Valley and founded Chillicothe were men in every way worthy of their Virginian fathers, the Washingtons, Johnsons, and Lees, without whom, even the noble John Adams of Massachusetts said, "there would never have been any Revolutionary War." The Western Reserve of Connecticut was filled in part from the Nutmeg State; and just south of the Reserve lay the Seven Ranges rapidly filling with immigrants from the neighboring State of Pennsylvania and some from Virginia and the South. Far to the west, just north of the Symmes Tract a steady stream of Kentucky

pioneers was pouring into northwestern Ohio, a fact which must be counted when an attempt is made to explain the strong partisan (Democratic) affiliation of the most westerly tier of Ohio counties north of the Symmes Purchase area. Thither the Virginians swarmed; for it is an interesting fact to note that while the Cavalier crossed the Ohio and occupied Ohio and Indiana and Illinois in very large numbers, the Yankee did not go southward to any noticeable degree. True, New Englanders were pleased to remark that many Yankees settled in the Ohio River towns on the Virginia side, as in Wheeling, giving to such points, in their opinion, a more hopeful outlook.<sup>1</sup> But the Yankee went not into Virginia and Kentucky in the same measure that the Long Knife surged into the Old Northwest.

The result was a most marvellous cross-breeding of half a dozen different stocks between the Ohio River and Lake Erie, producing a composite race of unparalleled energy and power.

On the 4th of March, 1881 [wrote Colonel Whittlesey, one of the shrewdest students of our history], three men of fine presence advanced on the platform at the east portico of the Federal capitol. On their right is a solid, square-built man of an impressive appearance, the Chief Justice of the United States [Waite]. On his left stood a tall, well-rounded, large, self-possessed personage, with a head large even in proportion to the body, who is President of the United States [Garfield]. At his left hand was an equally tall, robust, and graceful gentleman, the retiring President [Hayes]. Near by was a tall, not especially graceful figure, with an eye of an eagle, who is the General commanding the Army [W. T. Sherman]. A short, square, active officer, the Marshal Ney of America, is there as Lieutenant General [Sheridan]. Another tall, slender, self-

<sup>1</sup> Atwater, *Tour*.



An Ohio River Floating Theatre.

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poised man, of not ungraceful presence, was the focus of many thousands of eyes. He had carried the finances of the nation in his mind and in his heart four years as Secretary of the Treasury, the peer of Hamilton and Chase [John Sherman]. Of these six, five were natives of Ohio, and the other a life-long resident. Did this group of National characters from one State stand there by accident? Was it not the result of a long train of agencies, which, by force of natural selection, brought them to the front on that occasion!

It was for Senator Roscoe Conkling to compare beautifully the people and the soils of this focus-region between the Ohio and Lake Erie.

It is said that more than half of them [soils] came from far distant regions, clays and gravels, washed by the surge, and the drift of gigantic primal forces. This is typical of the people. I see around me those not only from New England, but from Old England, from Ireland, from Scotland, from cold Norway and Sweden, from warm and sunny France—from every clime where humanity struggles. What brought these men and women here? What made Ohio the rendezvous and asylum of struggling humanity in all nationalities? Liberty and free labor.

Ohio, the child of Virginia, as she rose from her cradle, turned her back upon precepts and examples of the mother State. The people who came here of all nationalities were bound by one common tie; they worshipped one God under different forms and they believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Here in this soil parent and child have illustrated two opposing systems of civilization. Ohio, representing the dignity of labor, believing honest labor the true foundation and passport to all real progress and greatness, has arisen like a meteor into the very zenith of the great republic. Virginia, believing that labor is degrading, that drudgery is menial and base, that capital should own labor, has stagnated and weltered, half smothered in the pool of servile labor. One of these States has prospered exceedingly; the other has been enervated, has remained prostrate, has cursed and rebelled, and at last drowned slavery in its own blood.

The Ohio River became, in the middle of the old century even more than it was at the beginning, the projection of Mason and Dixon's line. The coalescence of Long Knife and Yankee, of Irish, Quaker, Scotch-Irish, and Dutch, had progressed steadily in the Old Northwest for sixty years ere, in the burning heat of fratricidal struggle, it became clearer than ever what a marvellous dividing line the Ohio River was. That slavery clause in the masterly Ordinance, kept sacred by the conscience of immigrants from all parts of the seaboard, was as a flaming sword stretching from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi; and though it divided homes, setting father against son and brother against brother, yet, as a people, those who occupied the States carved out of the Territory northwest of the river Ohio were in favor of the ancient prohibition, while those south of the Ohio were as a people in favor of secession. In effect, the War of the Rebellion in the West was a struggle between the son of the Cavalier and the son of the Puritan; and between them flowed this wide, historic river on which their fathers had come to found a new empire. The intermingling of Yankee and Long Knife in the States of the Ohio Basin is shown by the large "copperhead" following in Ohio and Indiana and Illinois, on the one hand and the equally large Union following in Kentucky and what became West Virginia on the other. Yet, as a whole, the two causes were represented by the two shores of the river, especially below the Kentucky line, and the history of those four years of war in the Ohio Valley is a story of mutual reprisals, inroads, and bloodshed.

Few more typical experiences in war time on the

river are recorded than one furnished the author by the veteran steamboatman Captain J. A. Lempke of Indianapolis, and which we give practically in the captain's own words.

During the summer of 1861, when war feeling first grew high, when the lower Mississippi was blockaded and its shores controlled by the seceding States, business on the Ohio and the Mississippi was at a complete standstill. Captain Lempke had left the port of New Orleans for Louisville under Confederate clearance papers in April, to return there no more. After tying up his boat below the falls of the Ohio at Portland, the low-water harbor of the port of Louisville, he took pains to examine into the situation and found that he was carrying a heavy load of debt as ballast, and to go into the war, as he desired, meant a divorce from the *Fanny Buillit*, his boat, that would land him in financial ruin and bankruptcy. The time for the usefulness of boats had not then arrived, as it did the following winter and spring, when General Grant opened his campaign on the Cumberland and Tennessee.

Captain Dexter, with the *Charley Bowen*, a plucky, fast, and excellent little sternwheeler, which the year before he had brought from the Muskingum River, was, under adverse circumstances, straining every nerve to carry the United States mail two hundred miles of the lower Ohio along the hostile and rebellious shores of southwestern Kentucky, between Evansville and Cairo, and to establish a packet trade between the two points.

Henry T. Dexter would forgive his enemies, but not until after they had been hanged. He was a fearless champion of the flag and an enthusiastic

supporter of the Union, "Who never bowed his stubborn knee, and least of all to chivalry." As the river for some time previous had been his only field of work Captain Lempke determined not to leave it now, and when Captain Dexter asked him to take the clerk's (purser's) office on his boat he undertook the duties of the position temporarily at nominal pay, and filled the place of two men, standing both day and night watches without help. In a packet trade, with short distances between landings, this meant much work and little sleep. It was an exhaustive task, but he worried through it, and by so doing made a good friend of "the old man," as the commander, whether old or young, is always called on Ohio River boats.

During the early days of the war many annoyances occurred along the route, and the "colonels" on the Kentucky shore became quite troublesome. At Uniontown, Caseyville, and landings below, the mails, on account of the presence of guerrilla bands and small detachments of Confederate soldiers, frequently could not be landed. Dexter was known and hated by the Southern sympathizers all along the southern shores of the river, for, outspoken and fearless Union man that he was, he kept the Stars and Stripes flying at the jackstaff, and would defend it at the risk of the loss of his boat or his life if need be.

One morning early, when the *Bowen* was downstream bound, its officer was surprised to find moored to the bank below the mouth of the Cumberland and near Stewart's Island several steamers which had been dispatched south by the government as hospital boats. The captains of these boats, without military protection feared to proceed, for they had received information

of a large hostile force at Paducah, ten miles below and a battery of rebel guns controlling the river. This news aroused "the old man" to activity; he appeared to sniff combat from afar. He went about setting things to rights and making preparations for the fray.

As the *Bowen* continued on her trip the four-pound cannon on her forecastle, loaded with slugs, was moved into place and the match lighted; the small arms which had been obtained on a requisition from a military company at Evansville were loaded and distributed among the crew, the hot-water hose bent on and connected to the boilers, and the flag nailed to the jackstaff. On arriving opposite the city of Paducah the officers saw the landing and wharfboat covered with a mob, densely packed, awaiting the new arrival; nothing daunted, they "rounded to," and while slowly approaching the shore Dexter turned over the command of the boat to Lempke so he might be in immediate control of the cannon on the forecastle and the squad serving it. As the temporary captain hurried aloft and assumed the exposed position of captain, on the hurricane deck, he appreciated that as an easy and a shining mark to be picked off like a squirrel in a tree he outranked every one on board, and felt more nervous than proud. As the *Bowen* slowly approached the wharfboat, which was covered from end to end by a surging, armed mob, the crew recognized among them men well known to them as fire-eating haters of the Stars and Stripes, desperate and determined. Shouts went up commanding that the flag be lowered and the boat surrendered, but the plainly visible and murderous preparations held the shouters

in check and kept them from boarding the boat. Three or four of the leaders came forward to the edge of the wharfboat and made a demand upon Captain Dexter to lower the flag and surrender his boat. He, leaning against the capstan, retorted:

"Not as long as I have one shot left."

As he spoke he pointed to the little cannon on the forecastle, the man with the burning fuse, and the shining brass nozzles of death-dealing hot-water hose in the hands of Baker, the engineer; then, raising his hand toward the flag at the jackstaff, shouted:

"Lower it if you dare!"

While the parley was going on, to guard against a sudden rush of the mob, Lempke had carefully kept the steamer in such a position that her nose barely touched the lower corner of the wharfboat, and when the word came up that the mail had been delivered to the hands of the United States mail agent, instead of the usual command to the mate or deckhand, "Let go," Lempke sang out to the man who "stood by" with a sharp ax, "Cut the line." The twang and swish of it as under the strain it rebounded made welcome music, and as the throttle flew wide open the nimble little craft shot out into the middle of the stream backward. She kept her face to the enemy and was careful not to expose her flank until out of range of a possible fusillade from the baffled mob on shore.

The war feeling and hatred for the Union flag and its defenders at the time of the outbreak of the Rebellion ran high in southwestern Kentucky. A detachment of the Union soldiers from Cairo, Ill., on a raid into that State had shortly before captured and confiscated



Water-Works at Louisville, Kentucky.

SECRET  
NO. 1000  
1000  
1000  
1000



a steamer owned by Southern sympathizers in Paducah, which was openly engaged in contraband traffic through the lines up the Tennessee River. This had exasperated the colonels, and the attack upon the *Bowen* that day was in reprisal for the loss of their boat, and in revenge upon the hated "Yankees," but the project failed. By thorough preparation and stout-hearted defiance their design was thwarted. It was lucky for them that they did not fire; a single shot from shore would have let loose cannon, musketry, and hot-water batteries and wrought great slaughter on the dense crowd numbering several thousand men, packed close as they were on the wharf of the little city that day. The officers of the *Bowen* were ever after thankful that the affair had passed off without loss of life; for after the close of the war they again entered into friendly relations with these people and some who were participants in the affair described became stockholders in and officers of the corporation which, in the meantime, had increased to a daily mail line maintaining a number of fast and elegant sidewheel steamers and doing a prosperous and profitable business.

From the day when the *Bowen* stubbornly maintained the dignity of Old Glory, to the end of the war, through many ructions and alarums, the little boat never lowered the flag. The occupation of the territory surrounding the mouths of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers by garrisons of the boys in blue under General Sherman and others, which followed soon after, quieted the friends and drove the enemies south and into the Confederate army. The Cumberland River the following spring gave General Grant

access to Fort Donelson, and the Tennessee, with its thousand miles of navigable waters, opened for him at Shiloh the door to the heart of the Confederacy.

After the war there remained this ancient division line, and all down through the years has been sounded now and again the same old note of rivalry and antagonism. In a measure there is still a contest in the Ohio Valley of Puritan and Cavalier; the public prints often echo still the pros and cons of an endless argument in which both disputants forever are partly right and partly wrong. The eloquent Henry Watterson, from his desk at Louisville, has been the immemorial champion of the old régime and the continual critic of what he has styled "New England in Ohio." The question to-day is very much one of business and politics, and in this arena the "sharp Yankee" and the "swaggering Southerner" have fought the problem over again. It has been a bitter disappointment to Kentucky, for instance, not to be able to keep the commercial pace set by her three northern sisters across the Ohio River, who, because of their strategic position, have assumed the place in the nation which Kentucky occupied three quarters of a century ago.—

The last fifteen years [wrote Mr. Watterson more than a decade after the Civil War] have been slowly but surely developing a series of forces unknown to the era of simple movement—engineries of luxury, culture, and wealth—increased power to the strong, diminished opportunity to the weak—the astute, alert, and unprincipled few seeking by organization and artifice, the advantage they have come to believe a right over the unorganized, disorganized many. Of this emanation of commercial prosperity—this New England idea—the offspring of excessive tariffs and an optimistic educational system—Ohio is the representative and as such is redundant in the cant, catch-words,

and self-conceit of the half educated intellectual pioneer; the pride of piety and the misleading ebullitions of a spurious patriotic elation; pompous in moral pretence, ostentatious in æsthetic displays, and as totally unconscious of the underflow of depravity and crime as of the touching philosophy of Goldsmith's lines:

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

The answer to this fusillade was the perennial one, caustic and haughty:

Ohio is near Kentucky, and a comparison is very easily made. These are two great States in their extent, fertility, and natural resources. In these particulars Ohio is in no wise superior. The census reports show the relative conditions of these States. The statistics of the Postoffice Department throw some light upon their relative reading and writing capacity. Yet more, the manners and style of life of the people are very well known. If there is anything in the comparison in the least flattering to Kentucky, I hope Mr. Watterson will enjoy it.

Such is a sample of newspaper banter in our day and it is not without its significance.

Yet so far as the advancement of the northern States in the Ohio Basin is concerned we pointed out the secret of it—geographical position combined with a marvellous race-mixture. For it is not at all sure that the good New England stock would have made the Old Northwest what it has been if not strengthened by the cross-breeding we have described.

## Chapter XIV

### When the Steamboat was King

THE steamer *Clermont* sailed on the Hudson River, to the wonder of all eyes, in 1807. Fulton was quick to take complete advantage of his triumph and immediately began to secure monopoly rights and supply other rivers with his boats. The Ohio, with its tremendous possibilities commercially, early attracted his attention and in less than three years his agents were in the West.

In December, 1810, the Ohio Steamboat Navigation Company was incorporated by Daniel D. Tompkins, Robert R. Livingston, DeWitt Clinton, Robert Fulton, and Nicholas J. Roosevelt; the company was to operate steamers on the western waters under the Fulton-Livingston patents.

The last named incorporator, N. J. Roosevelt, a brother of President Theodore Roosevelt's grandfather, seems to have been the chief promoter of the Ohio branch of Fulton's great business. While his boat, the *New Orleans*, was on the ways Zadoc Cramer, editor of *The Navigator*, penned the following words which no doubt expressed the exact wonder and suspense entertained by the entire Ohio Valley's population:

It will be a novel sight, and as pleasing as novel, to see a huge boat working her way up the windings of the Ohio, without the

appearance of sail, oar, pole, or any manual labour about her—moving within the secrets of her own wonderful mechanism and propelled by power undiscoverable. This plan, if it succeeds, must open up to view flattering prospects to an immense country, an interior of not less than 2,000 miles of as fine a soil and climate as the world can produce, and to a people worthy of all the advantages that nature and art can give them. . . .

This thoughtful writer's suggestion that possibly Fulton's successful experiment on the Hudson would prove a failure on the Ohio is interesting though veiled. As the *New Orleans* was building, many must have expressed their doubts of its success, for the broad tide-water Hudson was a vastly different stream from this winding, snag-strewn Ohio. Surely if the new boat could master that thousand miles of reefs and snags and shifting bars, steam navigation would become all its boasting advocates were prophesying!

The boat had a keel 138 feet long and its total burden was three hundred tons; it was launched in March, 1811, and in the following October set sail for the South amid the applause of infant Pittsburg. The Roosevelt family were its passengers; one Baker was engineer, and Andrew Jack, the pilot; six "hands," with some domestics, completed the famous crew of the first steamer that floated on the River of Many White Caps.

The engine was fired with coal but the bunkers were soon exhausted, since the marvellous rate of nearly eight miles an hour was attained, and the woods were soon called upon to give up their beech and sycamore to feed the hungry fire-box.

The amazement of the countryside was great; crowds flocked to the Ohio's shore to witness the strange craft. Some at a distance from the river,

hearing the noise but seeing only the smoke, declared that a comet had fallen into the river. A local historian records that at Point Pleasant, at the mouth of the Great Kanawha,

landing for an hour was made for cord-wood, which could only be obtained by begging the courtesy of the keeper of the "Traveller's Rest," who could illy spare so much from his tavern store. While the wood was being toted aboard the singular craft nearly all the one hundred inhabitants examined, commented, criticised. Some claimed it was an attempt to chain nature's forces and would end in disaster to crew and owners, a mere invention of the devil's. Others watched every movement, took notes of all machinery, and resolved to "make a like machine or spoil a home."

The date of the sailing of the *New Orleans* is interestingly noted if not proved by the following reminiscence of P. S. Bush, an old resident of Covington:

In the fall of the year 1811, after the embargo was laid on English vessels, and before the earthquakes of December 1811, my father was residing on the Ohio River, nearly opposite General Harrison's farm at North Bend. The family was one day much surprised at seeing the young Mr. Weldons running down the river much alarmed, and shouting, "the British are coming down the river." There had of course been a current rumor of a war with that power. All the family immediately ran to the bank—We saw something, I knew not what, but supposed it was a saw mill from the working of the lever beam, making its slow but solemn progress with the current. We were shortly afterwards informed that it was a steamboat.

After a month's delay at the Falls at Louisville the *New Orleans* proceeded onward, reaching Natchez in December, where it entered regularly into the New Orleans and Mississippi trade. Its first year was immensely successful, partly due, no doubt, to the curiosity it attracted. Its captain in 1812, one Morris, records:

The boat's receipts for freight upwards has averaged the last year \$700; passage money, \$900; downwards, freight \$300; and \$500 for passengers. She performs thirteen trips during the year, which at \$2,400 per trip amounts to \$31,200. Her expenses are twelve hands, at \$30, per month each, equal to \$4,320; Captain's salary, \$1000; seventy cords of wood each trip, at \$1.75 per cord, equal to \$1,586; total expenses being \$6,906. It is presumed that the boat's extra trips for pleasure, or otherwise, out of her usual route, has paid for all the expenses of repairs; and with the profits of the bar-room, for the boat's provisions; in which case there will remain a net gain of \$24,294 for the first year. The owners estimate the boat's value at \$40,000, which produces an interest of \$2,400, and by giving \$1,894 more for furniture, etc., we have a clear gain of \$20,000 for the first year's labor of the steamer "New Orleans." This is a revenue superior to any other established in the United States, and what is equally gratifying, arising out of a capital whose application is of singular benefit to the whole community, and particularly so, as it respects the navigation of the Western waters.

But the prophecy of the doubters was, seemingly, fulfilled, nevertheless. The *New Orleans* did not return; it plied the lower Mississippi as the *Clermont* plied the Hudson, but a steamer was yet to ascend that mazy Ohio channel up which only the blundering barges had been so painfully crawling for some two generations past. Two more steamers were built, the *Comet* in 1812, a small affair of twenty-five tons, and the *Vesuvius*, of 390 tons, in 1814. This ship, built on the Fulton pattern at Pittsburg, went to New Orleans but on the return trip grounded in the Mississippi; it then went into the New Orleans-Natchez trade, as had the *New Orleans*—and another year passed without a steamer's ascending the Mississippi to the Ohio. The *Enterprise*, of seventy-five tons,

built at Brownsville, Pennsylvania, in service in 1814, was impressed by General Andrew Jackson at New Orleans. In May, 1815, she sailed from New Orleans for Louisville, and was the first steamer to overcome the Mississippi and Ohio currents. The time of the trip was twenty-five days; but the fact that both the rivers were out of banks, permitting the boat to make numerous "cut-offs" and sail almost constantly in still water or backwater, tended to neutralize the applause which greeted her feat; people still maintained that in ordinary water no steamer could ascend the Ohio.

It was for the good ship *Washington*, built at Wheeling and Brownsville, finally to reassure a doubting world. This boat was built under the personal supervision of her master, Captain Henry M. Shreve<sup>1</sup>; the hull was built at Wheeling, partly from battle-scarred timbers of old Fort Henry; the engines were built at the great Monongahela port. Everything was on original lines; the boat was a "double-decker," the first of its kind; the cabin was located between decks, and the boilers were placed on deck instead of in the hold as was usual. Shreve improved on both the Fulton and French patents, putting his cylinders in a horizontal position and giving the vibrations to the pitman; a double high-pressure engine, with cranks at right angles, was installed, also the first of that kind ever used on western waters. Shreve added to David Prentice's cam wheels his "great invention of the cam cut-off, with flues to the boilers, by which three fifths

<sup>1</sup> Henry M. Shreve was born in New Jersey in 1785 and died in 1851, and was one of the most noted steamboatmen of the early days. He was the inventor of the steam snag-boat and did valiant service on the lower Mississippi in the War of 1812. According to the diary of his father, Shreveport, La., was named for him.





The Coal Fleet.

1957

of the fuel were saved.”<sup>1</sup> On September 24, 1816, the new boat passed over the falls at Louisville on her first trip to New Orleans. There Edward Livingston examined the boat and remarked to the ingenious Shreve: “You deserve well of your country, young man; but we shall be compelled to beat you in court if we can.” Fulton and Livingston claimed the sole right to navigate the western waters. The case was a critical one but Shreve was undaunted; he denied the constitutionality of the plaintiffs’ monopoly and the District Court of Louisiana negatived their so-called “exclusive rights.”

The *Washington* returned to Louisville and on March 12, 1817, began her second trip to New Orleans, returning to Louisville in forty-one days, round trip time. The performance was greeted everywhere with great applause; after this second trip from New Orleans to Louisville no one doubted the place and future power of the steamboat. Captain Shreve was fêted in Louisville and wild prophecies were made that the trip from New Orleans to Louisville would some day be made by steamers in ten days! (In thirty-six years it was made in 105 hours.)

The commencement of steam navigation in the Mississippi Valley dates from this second northern trip of the *Washington* in 1817. Immediately a score of shipyards were constructed, and in the next

<sup>1</sup> Our quotation is from James T. Lloyd’s intensely interesting volume, *Steamboat Directory and Disasters on the Western Waters, containing the history of the First Application of Steam as a Motive Power*. Cincinnati, 1856. The reliability of this volume is often open to question. Mr. Lloyd, for instance, has the *Washington* explode and burn to the water’s edge in 1816 and in the next year make its famous run from New Orleans to Louisville.

generation such a large number of steamboats were launched that the Mississippi Basin, in point of shipping tonnage, sprang to the front and in the middle of the century led the world. Nowhere has the old adage "Necessity is the mother of invention" been illustrated more excellently than just here in the history of Ohio River navigation. The growing commerce of a rich empire innocent of roads gave zest to the struggles of ingenious men, such as Captain Shreve. Active and resourceful brains gave themselves to the problem of fitting the steamboat to the needs of the time. For instance, the earliest boats had model hulls, built like the sea-going ships that preceded them. We have seen that Captain Shreve hoisted his engine out of the hold, but it was some time before any man dared to build a boat *without* a hold. The early boats were built to run *in* the water, but at last some level-headed schemer (at whom people no doubt jeered) decided that they could run *on* the water better than *in* it.

Thus in a moment's time a great change and a great advance was made; steamboats were built as flat on the bottom as the flattest old-time "broad-horn"; the difference was as great as though the volume of water in the Ohio had been trebled, for the new boats drew only a third as much water as the old. With this discovery the complete success of the western steamboat was assured. In 1819 there were sixty-three steamers on the Ohio; in 1832 there were 230 steamboats west of the Alleghenies, sixty per cent. of which were over 120 tons burden. The total cost of running these boats was about four and one half millions. Ten years later there were 450 boats in the West, costing ten millions a year to operate.

In 1842 forty-five boats were built at Cincinnati, thirty-five at Louisville and vicinity, twenty-five at Pittsburg, and fifteen at other points, with a combined tonnage of 26,788. At the same time the total shipping tonnage of the Great Lakes was only 17,652, and of New York City only 35,260. The total tonnage of the entire British Empire in 1834 was but 82,696, and of the entire Atlantic seaboard (including New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, etc.) but 76,064; while the total tonnage of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers was 126,278! Nothing could illustrate the tremendous strides of the steamboat in the West so effectively as these all but incredible figures.

In a large measure the Ohio steamboats were owned by private persons and frequently were operated in person by their owner or chief owner. The results of this condition were manifold, chief of which was the rivalries that sprang up—as intense as any rivalry horse owners every knew. Competition was intense, extending into every department of the business; competitors vied with each other in size of boats, equipments, embellishments, capacity, and speed. During the decade 1830–1840 the art of rendering steamboats palatial in every detail reached a ridiculous climax; this might well be called the Gingerbread Era in steamboat history; the boats were decorated with a mass of glittering, flimsy material fit only for show. One by one these fancy features gave way to the practical. In 1834, it is said, the ship-heads, bowsprits, figureheads, and chains were discarded. The models of the steamboats of the forties evinced great improvement, being longer, of less draught, and faster than those of the decade preceding. The hulls

were stauncher and contained less weight of timber; the cabins gained in comfort and convenience at the expense of gaudiness.

And yet these boats, in the heyday of the passenger steamer era, were veritable palaces for their time. These years were those of the two decades prior to the Civil War, especially 1840-1850. The prosperity of the lower Mississippi plantations was very great and New Orleans outranked, in point of shipping tonnage, New York and the entire Atlantic seaboard cities combined.<sup>1</sup> Money flowed northward in vast quantities to St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Pittsburg. The opulent upper class travelled much on pleasure and business and the steamer's deck in 1845 was the fashion plate of the day. As will be seen large sums of money were carried and the gaming tables were one of the requisites of every fast-flying, fashionable packet. Large sums were won and lost and every boat was a rendezvous of professional men-at-chance, not less proficient than those who haunt the modern Atlantic liner, and a deal more outspoken and chivalrous. They fleeced the unwitting planter with all the grace in the world and invited him to let them know when next he roamed abroad and then loaned him a small stake for his return passage.

We have compared the old-time steamer to the race-horse, and the comparison was altogether fitting. Only a slight knowledge of the travelling public of that day is necessary to realize how much the quality of speed would be prized; it was the one great desider-

<sup>1</sup>In 1842 the steamboat tonnage accredited to New Orleans was 80,993; the entire combined tonnage of all the Atlantic seaboard cities was only 76,064. See *Memorial of the Citizens of Cincinnati . . . to Congress*, Cincinnati, 1844.



Point Pleasant, West Virginia.





eratum. The records of arrivals and departures of boats were the study of owners and rivals and the public at large. New devices for generating great heat in the shortest space of time absorbed the attention of engineers, who soaked their coal in rosin and opened so many draughts that the fires all but dropped out. And it is interesting that during the middle decades of the century records were made that have never again been equalled. The story of the building of the far-famed *J. M. White*, and her record run from New Orleans to St. Louis is of sufficient interest and value to repeat in detail.

This boat was built at the home of the renowned *Monongahela Farmer*, Elizabeth, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1844 in what was known as the "upper yard," owned and operated by Samuel Walker, Sr. Her builder was J. M. Converse of St. Louis, the funds being furnished by Robert Chateau of the same city.<sup>1</sup> It was William King, familiarly known as "Billy" King to a whole generation of rivermen, however, who draughted the boat and made a lasting reputation. He designed the boat so that she would get added speed from her draught; his calculation was to make the boat produce but two swells under way, one midway under the boilers and one under the wheels. The master-thought of the scheme was to set the wheels just where they would catch the forward swell and make the most of it.

King drew his plans and submitted them to

<sup>1</sup> Our facts are largely taken from the "Boat Building Centennial Edition" of the Elizabeth, Pa., *Herald* (June 7, 1900), a most valuable compilation prepared by Editor Wylie. The story of the *J. M. White* had previously been written by John A. Lambert, of the Somerset *Standard*.

Converse, who at once noted the variation from the time-tried pattern and opposed it. King was a man of few words; to the criticism of Converse, who frankly said the boat would be ruined by such a radical departure as placing the wheel beams twenty feet farther aft than usual, King made almost no reply except that he should build the boat on those lines or not at all.

Converse went to Walker [writes Mr. Lambert] and told him where King wanted to place the beams, and what he had said to King.

"And what did King say?" asked Walker. "He did n't say anything." "Well," said Walker, "if he has made up his mind to put them there he'll do it or he won't finish the boat. You had better write Chauteau and ask his advice." Converse wrote to Chauteau at once, explaining the matter fully, saying that if the wheels were placed where King wanted to put them the boat would be spoiled. The reply came in due time, and it was brief enough: "Let King put beams where he pleases."

That settled it, and Converse did not interfere further with King's plans. The keenness of King's judgment was eloquently told by his masterpiece, when she made her famous run from New Orleans to St. Louis in three days, twenty-three hours, and nine minutes.

That run of the "J. M. White" made "Billy" King famous, and the steamboat owners of St. Louis besought him with princely offers to draft a steamboat that would beat her time, but he refused to do so. He simply said: "If any man drafts a boat that shall beat her time, I will then draft one to beat that."

After the "J. M. White" had been worn out it dawned upon steamboatmen that there had never been a boat that equalled her in speed, and they then tried to secure her draft. This King refused to surrender, and no other man had a copy of it or could duplicate it.

It was not known that King had made a model of the "White," but he had. After building the "White" he went to St. Louis

in the employ of a boat-building company. His wife remained at Elizabeth for some time. About four months after he had gone to St. Louis, King wrote to a friend at Elizabeth—John Lambert, Sr., father of the writer—and this is briefly the substance of what he said in the letter: “Bring my wife to St. Louis as soon as she can get ready. Go into the attic of my house, and close under the comb of the roof you will find a model in a box; bring that box with you, and don’t open it or allow any one to see it. Lock it in a stateroom on the boat, and leave it there until you reach St. Louis. I will pay all expenses.” When this gentleman went to Mrs. King with the letter she knew nothing of the model. “If there is one in the attic,” she said, “I don’t know when he put it there.” The box was found, however, where King said it was, and was taken to St. Louis as requested.

King met his wife and the gentleman on their arrival, and his first inquiry after greeting them was concerning the model. Being told that it was locked up on the boat, he went for it and carried it to his home, where he at once opened the box in the presence of the gentleman who had taken it to St. Louis. It was probably never seen by any other person than King, his wife, and the gentleman referred to. It was a beautiful model made of pine and black walnut. It was ten feet two inches long, and otherwise in beautiful proportion. Without saying a word King went to his tool-chest, took therefrom a saw, and cut the model into several pieces, then with a hatchet completed its destruction by cutting it into kindling wood. The gentleman present said, “Say, Billy, I could have done that at home just as well as you have, and saved you the expense of bringing it here.” “That may all be,” replied King, “but I never would have been satisfied that it had been done.”

King said at the time that he still had a draft of the “White” on paper, but, although it was sought for time and again by men who would have given a fortune for it, it has never been found, and the equal of the famous “J. M. White” has never been built.

It is believed that an “exhibition” model of the great racer was a prized ornament of Secretary

Stanton's office at the War Department during Lincoln's administration.

A boat launch was always an inspiring sight, and the occasions were made to some extent gala days. Crowds gathered to see the sight, and usually a goodly number went on the boat for her first plunge into the water. Sometimes there was the christening ceremony by breaking a bottle of wine over the bow of the vessel, but that custom never became very general. In those early days, when it was considered only a part of hospitality to pass the decanter glass to all who came beneath one's roof, the sturdy old boat builders seemed to think that a better use could be found for liquor than the pouring of it over oaken planks.

A large vessel of egg-nog was always prepared for a launch, and had a prominent place in the yard shed, with tin cups convenient, and a general invitation to all to participate. Later this sometimes gave place to a keg of ale, and this was seen even in the later years of the industry at the upper yard. But the growth of temperance sentiment finally led to the omission of this once always present feature of a launch.

Another early custom was the firing of a cannon just as the boat glided down the ways, but a tragic occurrence led to the abandonment of this feature.

The boat was usually built so as to go into the river stern foremost, though occasionally it was let in sidewise. It was set up on blocks under the keel and "shores" (posts) around the sides. Before the launch two ways were constructed under the boat and leading by an easy declivity to the river. These were thoroughly greased and then timbers to slide were laid on them and the space between that and the bottom of the boat built up with blocks. Each way and slide was firmly lashed together at one point by a rope passed around and around them.

Then the blocks were removed from under the keel, and at a command the shores were knocked from under the sides of



Launching a Boat at Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

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the boat. The men were distributed along both sides of the vessel for this work, and during the minutes that it lasted there was a bedlam of sound, as the many mauls descended on the shores and they were one by one knocked from their places. This done, only the "lashings" held the boat to the spot where she had slowly grown into being, and a man with a keen edged, broad-bladed axe stood beside each of these, ready to strike the blow which would sever the cords and release the vessel, poised and eager for her element of the future.

It is a time of suppressed excitement. The din of the blows and the falling shores is suddenly succeeded by a silence that is intense. Every breath is held, all listen for the words which shall free the vessel, tugging as a hound at the leash. Soon it comes in the sharp command, "Cut lashings!" The gleaming axes descend—the cords are severed—the vessel starts, moving slowly at first, but soon gaining momentum, and gliding with ever-increasing speed down the ways until she strikes the water with a great splash, and a moment later rides proudly on the bosom of the river, a thing of grace and beauty.

There is a volume bound appropriately in sombre black to which we have briefly referred on a previous page, Lloyd's *Steamboat Directory and Disasters on Western Waters*. The most superficial glance at this book will prove to the reader what a blood-red chapter could be written on the steamer disasters of the Ohio River. There was danger enough, Heaven knows, to these early boats in the way of reefs, shoals, bars, wrecks, and snags; but for a long period the danger of travelling was immeasurably increased by attempts to make record runs, or beat the rival boat. As for the natural obstructions some facts are a matter of history. In 1866, for instance, when a careful examination of the Ohio was made it was found that there were twenty-eight sunken wrecks alone between Pittsburg and Wheeling; in the six hundred miles between Pittsburg

and Louisville there were seventy-five dangerous snags, forty-nine "logs and loggy places," and one hundred wrecks and sunken boats and a total of 252 obstruction points of great danger. Ten thousand "obstructions" had been removed from the Ohio in the twenties and thirties, when the work suddenly ceased. Every sunken boat or wreck endangered every other craft afloat, and as many of these obstructions lay in or perilously near the narrow channel, a gale of wind, a fog, or an error in navigation frequently proved fatal to passing ships.

But criminal carelessness of crews was responsible for the most disastrous tragedies of Ohio steamboat annals. The explosion of the *Moselle* at Cincinnati April 25, 1838, was one of the most terrible of these calamities. The *Moselle* was a fast boat, holding the record between St. Louis and Cincinnati (750 miles) at sixty-four hours. On the day mentioned she drew out of her pier at Cincinnati with a passenger list numbering over 250 men, women, and children. A landing in the suburbs of Cincinnati was made to take on a party of German emigrants. The boilers were being forced to their limit in anticipation of equalling or surpassing all previous records, and as the boat was leaving shore the four boilers exploded simultaneously. The entire end of the boat in front of the wheels was blown to kindling wood; the force of the explosion was accounted at the time the most terrific known in the annals of steam—and the "new record" was one of deaths and not of speed. It is said that passengers were blown upon both the Ohio and the Kentucky shores, and the exaggeration may not be as great as it seems. Eighty-one passengers



were known to have been killed and fifty-five were missing; many of the latter never reappeared. At a public meeting in the city "the great and increasing carelessness in the navigation of steam vessels" was vehemently denounced.

The burning of the Louisville-New Orleans packet *Ben Sherrod* in 1837 on her way northward to Louisville was one of the most terrible dramas in the annals of western steamboat history. Mr. Lloyd thus recounts the event:

It was one o'clock at night, and the boat was about fourteen miles above Fort Adams, ploughing her way up the Mississippi with great velocity. The "Prairie" was just ahead of her, in sight, and the crew of the "Ben Sherrod" were determined, if possible, to go by her. The firemen were shoving in the pine knots, and sprinkling rosin over the coal, and doing their best to raise more steam. They had a barrel of whiskey before them, from which they drank often and freely until they were beastly drunk. The boilers became so hot that they set fire to sixty cords of wood on board, and the "Ben Sherrod" was soon completely enveloped in flames. The passengers, three hundred in number, were sound asleep, not thinking of the awful doom that awaited them. When the deck hands discovered the fire, they basely left their posts and ran for the yawl, without giving the alarm to the passengers. Capt. Castleman attempted for a time to allay the excitement and confusion, by telling them the fire was extinguished. Twice he forbade the lowering of the yawl, which was attempted. The shrieks of nearly three hundred and fifty persons now on board, rose wild and dreadful, which might have been heard at a distance of several miles. The cry was, "To the shore! to the shore!" and the boat made for the starboard shore, but did not gain it, as the wheel ropes soon burnt. The steam was not shut off, and the boat kept on up the river. The scene of horror now beggared all description. The yawl, which had been filled with the crew, had sunk, drowning nearly all who were in it; and the passengers

had no other alternative than to jump overboard, without even taking time to dress. There were ten ladies who all went overboard without uttering a single scream; some drowned instantly, and others clung to planks; two of the number were all that were saved. Several passengers were burnt alive. One man by the name of Ray, from Louisville, Kentucky, jumped overboard, and hung to a rope at the bow of the boat, until rescued by the yawl of the steamer "Columbus," which arrived at the scene half an hour after the boat took fire. Mr. Ray's face and arms were much burnt while clinging to the boat. He lost twenty thousand dollars in specie. The steamboat "Alton" arrived half an hour after the "Columbus," but from the carelessness or indiscretion of those on her, was the means of drowning many persons who were floating in the water. She came down under full headway among the exhausted sufferers, who were too weak to make any further exertion, and by the commotion occasioned by her wheels drowned a large number. A gentleman by the name of Hamilton, from Limestone county, Alabama, was floating on a barrel, and sustaining also a lady, when the "Alton" came up, washing them both under. The lady was drowned, but Mr. Hamilton came up and floated down the river fifteen miles, when he was rescued by the steamer "Statesman." Mr. McDowell sustained himself some time against the current, so that he floated only two miles down the river, and then swam ashore. His wife, who was floating on a plank, was drowned by the steamer "Alton." Mr. Rundell floated down the river ten miles, and was taken up by a flat-boat at the mouth of Buffalo creek; he saved his money in his pantaloons' pocket. Mr. McDowell lost his wife, son, and a lady named Miss Frances Few, who was under his protection; also a negro servant. Of those who escaped, we have seen and conversed with James P. Wilkinson, Esq., Mr. Stanfield, of Richmond, Virginia, and Daniel Marshall, Esq., of Moscow, Indiana. The scene, as described by them, was truly heart-rending; while some were confined to their berths, and consumed by the flames, others plunged into the river to find watery graves. One lady, who attached herself to Mr. Marshall, and had clung to him while they floated



Parkersburg, West Virginia, from "Fort Boreman."

12. 21. 1911  
13. 22. 1911  
14. 23. 1911  
15. 24. 1911  
16. 25. 1911  
17. 26. 1911  
18. 27. 1911  
19. 28. 1911  
20. 29. 1911  
21. 30. 1911  
22. 31. 1911

four or five miles, was at length drowned by the waves of the "Alton," after imploring the boat's crew for assistance and mercy. Mr. Marshall was supported by a flour barrel. Only two ladies out of ten who were on board were saved; one of these was Mrs. Castleman, the Captain's wife; the other was Mrs. Smith, of New Orleans.

It was said by some of the passengers, that the captain of the "Alton" did not hear the cries of those who implored him for assistance as he passed, it being midnight; but there can be no excuse for the monster who commanded the "Prairie," for leaving a boat in flames without turning around and affording the sufferers relief. He reported her on fire at Natchez and Vicksburg.

A man in a canoe near the scene of the disaster refused to save any who were floating in the water, unless they promised to pay him handsomely for his services. So rapid were the flames that not even the register of the boat was saved; hence it was impossible to get a full list of the lost. One of the officers of the boat informed us, that out of seventy-eight deck passengers not more than six were saved. This was one of the most serious calamities that ever occurred on the Mississippi river, there being at least one hundred and seventy families deprived by it of some dear and beloved member, and over two hundred souls being hurried by it out of time into eternity, with scarce a moment's warning. During the burning of the "Ben Sherrod" eight different explosions occurred; first, barrels of whiskey, brandy, &c.; then the boilers blew up with a fearful explosion, and lastly, forty barrels of gunpowder exploded, which made a noise that was heard many miles distant, scattering fragments of the wreck in all directions, and producing the grandest sight ever seen. Immediately after, the wreck sunk out of sight just above Fort Adams. A large quantity of specie which was on its way to the Tennessee Banks, was lost. One gentleman placed his pocket-book, containing thirty-eight thousand dollars, under his pillow, and though he managed to escape, he lost all his money. One scene was distressing in the extreme; a young and beautiful lady, whose name was Mary Ann Walker, on hearing the cry of fire, rushed out of

the ladies' cabin in her loose night-clothes in search of her husband, at the same time holding her infant to her bosom, in her endeavors to get forward her dress caught fire, and was torn from her back to save her life. After witnessing her husband fall into the flames in the forward part of the boat, and unable to reach him, she leaped with her child into the water, seized a plank, and was carried by the current within forty yards of the "Columbus," but just as she seized a rope thrown to her, both mother and child sank to rise no more. One young man, who had reached the hurricane deck in safety, hearing the cries of his sister, rushed back to the cabin, clasped her in his arms, and both were burnt to death. One of the clerks, one of the pilots, and the mate were burnt to death. All the chambermaids and women employed in the boat perished; only two negroes escaped out of thirty-five that were in the boat.

A gentleman, Mr. Cook, floated down the river several miles before he was picked up. He hailed the wretched and despicable character who had put off in a yawl from the shore, and begged his assistance. The scoundrel, who was intent in picking up baggage, boxes, &c., asked with the utmost *sang froid*, "How much will you give me?" To the entreaties of others for help, he replied, "Oh, you are very well off there; keep cool, and you 'll come out comfortable."

Poor Davis, the pilot at the wheel, was consumed; he was one in a thousand, preferring to die rather than leave his post in the hour of danger. Just before he left New Orleans, he was conversing with another pilot about the burning of the "St. Martinsville"; said he, "if ever I should be on a boat that takes fire, and don't save the passengers, it will be because the tiller ropes burn, or I perish in the flames." And just such men as Davis are to be found among the western boatmen; many have stood by their posts in the hour of danger, and perished rather than flinch from their duty.

It were well-nigh impossible, however, to sketch in a single chapter even imperfectly the lights and shades of the old steamboat days. It is not an ex-

aggeration to say that they are altogether passed—the days of “white intermingled with purple” in the old-time Middle West; the more distant days, when, for instance, the old horns used on the flatboats were transferred to the steamboat. It has been said that the first whistle was blown by steam on the *Allequippe* in 1828, while the same honor is claimed for the old side-wheeler *Lexington*. One of the early actual accounts of whistle-blowing is left of Captain J. S. Nale, part owner and engineer of the *Revenue*.

You see they were making a trip with government supplies to Fort Tousey, on the Red River, in 1844. They had the whistle then, for while they were making the trip Polk was inaugurated President, and old Capt. Neal—he was n't old then—was the only Democrat on the boat, and I tell you he made the Injuns jump when he set that old whistle to tooting. In those days the whistle was placed a-top of the boilers and the engineer could amuse himself to his heart's content if he wanted to. Old Capt. Neal was a steamboatman born. He was the first man on the river to use the life preserver and sent Capt. W. H. Fulton all the way to Philadelphia to get a supply of them for the “Revenue.”

Many pages might be given to the history of the old steamboat days, just before the advent of the railroad in the West. A few descriptions of the steamer in its heyday must be recorded.

It is a curious circumstance [we read in *Cist's Miscellanies*] that the progress of steamboat building for ocean navigation has just brought us, as the point of perfection, to the model and proportions of the first vessel of which we have any record. I allude to the ark built by Noah. The dimensions of the “Great Britain” are—length three hundred and twenty-two feet, breadth of beam fifty feet, depth thirty-one and a half feet. The dimensions of the ark were—length three hundred cubits, breadth fifty cubits, depth thirty cubits. It will be

seen, therefore, that the ark was nearly twice the size in depth, breadth, and length of the steamboat, the cubit being twenty-two inches. Both had upper, lower, and middle stories.

The steamer *Yorktown* which ran between Cincinnati and New Orleans, built in 1844, was one of the palatial boats of its day.

Her measurements and equipments are as follows. Length 182 feet, breadth of beam 31 feet, water wheels 28 feet in diameter, length of buckets ten feet three inches and twenty-eight inches wide. Hold eight feet. She has four boilers, thirty feet long, and forty-two inches in diameter, double engines, and two twenty-four-inch cylinders, with nine feet stroke; she draws four feet light, and hardly more than eight feet with 550 tons freight, her full cargo. She has forty state rooms and of course eighty berths, all appropriated to cabin-passengers; the boat officers being provided with state rooms in the pilot house. This arrangement affords the officers opportunity of attending to their appropriate duties without the annoyance and interference of others and dispensing with that *regular nuisance* the *Social Hall* protects the gentlemen and especially the ladies on board, from the effluvia of Cigars, which, in ordinary cases taints the whole range of the cabins.

The state rooms are spacious, capable of being well ventilated, with commodious stools which afford seats independent of those for the tables. Each berth has its upper and lower mattress.—To the ladies' cabin there are permanent sky-lights, and a lower range of movable lights by which the supply of warm or fresh air in the ladies' rooms is regulated at pleasure. The cabin seats are armed chairs, which being two feet in breadth afford ample space at the table, and protect the feeble and infirm from being crowded or elbowed at meals. The chains and other iron fastening work usually projecting in every direction to the annoyance of passengers at all times—at night especially—are here disposed of out of the way and generally out of sight. Such are the arrangements for convenience and comfort on board the "*Yorktown*," that there are few persons who command at home the *agremens* which are provided here, and the





The Successors of the Swift Canoe.

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only thing I object to in the boat is the danger of its rendering her passengers unsatisfied with the measure of their enjoyments at home, by the force of contrast. Sound judgment and taste have dictated all the details. Everything about her is of the best quality and highest finish, and strength, convenience and elegance are everywhere apparent. The floors are carpeted in exquisite taste. Even the folding doors which admit to the ladies' cabin, with their rich panel work can hardly find a rival in the mansions of the aristocracy in our Atlantic cities.

The "Yorktown" is supplied with two of Evans' Safety Guards, one to each outside boiler, and her tiller and bell ropes are all of wire.—An hundred feet of hose is ready at a moment's notice to convey a torrent of water to the most extreme part of the boat. The hurricane roof is covered with sheet iron, and a half a dozen water casks, constantly filled, are here and there, for immediate use in case of fire. The seventy-two table chairs are connected with life preservers beneath the seats, of such buoyancy that each chair has been tested to float two persons. All the doors and window shutters—nearly five hundred in number—are on lifting hinges and can be detached at a moment's notice. Each of these can buoy up a passenger in case of necessity until assistance could arrive.

Her Engine is equal in all respects to the general superiority of this boat over her rivals in this trade. I cannot go into details on this and other points without extending this article beyond reasonable bounds, but must not, however, omit to notice as of great importance that her shafts and cranks are of *wrought iron*. This is the first introduction of wrought iron for such purposes on steamboats. Steamboat shafts should never have been made of anything else.

I hazard nothing in the assertion that there has never yet floated a boat equal in all respects to the "Yorktown" upon the Ohio or Mississippi, and that the whole building, finishing, and furnishing interest at Pittsburg, Wheeling, Louisville or St. Louis may be defied to exhibit her match. It will be time enough for her to be surpassed here when she can be rivalled elsewhere. If this statement appears extravagant to any man of intelligence, let him visit the boat, and if he does not find my

details correct, and fifty things besides found equally remarkable and interesting which I have not space to describe, I will again defer the conclusion to which I have come as to her superiority in everything, almost, to any boat afloat or in port.

The "Yorktown" has not cost her owners, Kellogg & Kennett and T. J. Halderman, less than 33,000 dollars. She will be commanded by the last named gentleman, with Mr. George Gassaway, clerk.

Another boat, the *Star-Spangled Banner*, was built in 1844, and had the following measurements:

Length, 183 feet. Breadth of beam, thirty-one feet. Water wheels, twenty-seven feet in diameter; length of buckets, ten feet, and twenty-eight inches wide. Hold, seven feet nine inches. She has four boilers twenty-eight feet in length, forty-two inches diameter, double engines, and two twenty-four-inch cylinders, with nine feet stroke. She draws four feet water light, and hardly more than eight feet with five hundred tons, her full cargo. She has thirty-six state rooms, and of course seventy-two berths, all appropriated to cabin passengers, the boat officers being provided with state rooms in the pilot house. This arrangement affords the officers an opportunity to attend to their appropriate duties without the annoyance and interference of others, and dispensing with the *nuisance* of a Social Hall, protects the gentlemen, and especially the ladies on board, from the *effluvia* of cigars, which ordinarily taints the whole range of the cabins. As respects the berths, I notice as an improvement, that the lower berth projects over the line of the upper one, in this respect affording facilities for reaching the higher range without the usual inconvenience. The cabin seats are armed chairs, two feet in breadth, which supply a degree of comfort and protection to the aged or the invalid in assigning them space at the dinner table, which cannot be encroached on, and enabling them to take their meals as pleasantly as at home.

The "Star Spangled Banner," is in short built for convenience, comfort and speed, and I doubt not will prove a popular boat in the New Orleans trade for which she is designed. A speedy return with full freight and passengers to our public landing

will I trust, justify all I expect, from the business capacities of the boat.

Her engines built by J. Goodloe, judging by her trial trip on last Thursday, work with unsurpassed ease and efficiency, and are highly creditable to the shop where made.

The "Star Spangled Banner" is owned by Richard Phillips & Elmore Bateman, who are also Captain and clerk to the boat.

In February, 1846, the iron steamboat *Hunter*, driven by submerged horizontal propellers, left Cincinnati and ran to the mouth of the Great Miami, twenty-two miles, in one hour and twenty minutes. "This is a rate of speed," wrote a steamboat chronicler, "unprecedented for any boat like the *Hunter*—but one hundred feet in length—and seems to indicate that the propellers have not had fair play at the East, where they have been considered a failure."

It required great nerve and hardihood to pilot these magnificent steamers on a river which was so full of obstructions and which had received so little improvement as the Ohio, and especially as the boats were frequently packed with humanity. It was a long, hard journey to the position of pilot, and for success a man was as dependent on his own home-spun sagacity as on any definite knowledge; it would seem as though many an accident had been avoided through the possession of a sort of miraculous intuition.

It was the pride of every steamboat captain to have his boat equipped with a large and sweet sounding bell; as a result bell foundries in the Ohio Valley became one of the important industries. In 1840 there were eight bell foundries in Cincinnati which increased to twelve in the next five years, turning out bells to the aggregate value of \$135,000. The "Buckeye

Brass and Bell Foundry" became very widely known; the bells made in 1845 for the largest steamboats weighed as follows: *Felix Grundy*, 500 lbs.; *Richmond*, 500 lbs.; *Convoy*, 500 lbs.; *Queen City*, 500 lbs.; *Magnolia*, 625 lbs.; *Sea*, 500 lbs.; *Belle Creole*, 500 lbs.; *Princess*, 500 lbs.; *Bulletin*, 720 lbs.; *James Dick*, 500 lbs.; *Andrew Jackson*, 500 lbs.; *Geo. Washington*, 500 lbs.; *Reindeer*, 500 lbs.; *Hercules*, 500 lbs.; *Huntsville*, 500 lbs.; *Pride of the West*, 700 lbs.; *Albatross*, 500 lbs.; *Old Hickory*, 500 lbs.; *American Eagle*, 500 lbs.

A writer in the *Cincinnati Commercial* in 1882 gave some interesting sentences concerning the personal element of the old steamboat days, especially the deck hands. "Deckeneering" in the olden time, from 1811 to about 1830, was the work of a class of men entirely different from those who now occupy that sphere.

They were native Americans, whose manhood exacted a manly treatment, and whose intelligence enabled them to learn the channel, to gain promotion to the pilot-house, to become masters and owners. I could call to-day the names of many living pilots, captains and owners, yes, the names of some whose wealth is reckoned in hundreds of thousands who began life as common deck hands on the Ohio River.

Subsequently the Americans appear to have wholly abandoned this calling, and for a number of years their places were filled mostly by Germans. Later, between 1835 and 1840 the Irish came upon the scene, appearing first at New Orleans, where they had immigrated from various Irish ports, and quickly driving off the Germans until the war monopolized nearly all the deck labor upon Western steamboats.

Although in ante-bellum days the slaves were sometimes rented out to Southern boats, it was not until the breaking out of the rebellion that negroes became generally engaged in this



The Bell of the *City of Cincinnati*

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pursuit; but ever since the war their numbers have steadily increased, until to-day, the whites have been almost wholly supplanted.

With these successive changes in the nationality of the deck crews there have been changes in their individual condition, from good to bad, and from bad to worse, until to-day it is one to excite remonstrance.

The steamboat days cannot be passed without a story or two that will bring up the steamboat of the old days as the haven of the card sharper and gambler. The two conditions desired by this enterprising class of citizens were answered on the steamboat of anti-railroad days; here were men with both money and leisure. The result was that gambling became the one chief form of relaxation, of amusement, on the old river boats, and thousands of dollars, carried by rich planters of the South and merchants of the North was the plunder and prey of the old steamboat gambler. An old gambler leaves the following story as a sample of one of his many escapades through a forty-five year career as a sporting man.

Coming up on the "Sultana" one night there were about twenty-five of the toughest set of men as cabin passengers I believe I ever met. They were on their way to Napoleon, Ark., which at that time was a great town and known as the jumping-off place. In those days these Napoleon fellows were looked upon as cut-throats and robbers, and thought nothing of murdering a fellow simply to make them appear big men with their gang. I had for a partner a man named Canada Bill, as game a party as ever strode the deck of a steamboat, and one of the shrewdest gamblers I ever encountered.

As soon as supper was over this gang of Arkansas toughs got in the cabin and of course wanted to play cards. Bill had opened up business in the main hall, and a great crowd had gathered about him. I saw that most of these devils had been

drinking, and gave Bill the nod, which he of course understood. He only played a short while and left the game, pretending to be broke. Then we fixed it up that I should do the playing and he would watch out for any trouble. Well, the result was I got about everything the twenty-five men had, including their watches, and beat some seven or eight other passengers. The men all took it apparently good-natured at the time, but as the night wore on and they kept drinking from their private flasks I made a sneak to my room and changed my clothes. By the back stairs I slipped into the kitchen and sent a man after my partner. I had blackened my face, and looked like one of the negro rousters. I only had time to warn him, when a terrible rumpus up-stairs told me the jig was up, and with their whiskey to aid them they were searching for me, and if they caught me it would be good day to me. I paid the cooks to keep mum, and Bill made himself scarce. They had their guns out, and were kicking in the state-room doors hunting for me. Some of them came down on deck, and were walking back and forth by me, cursing and threatening vengeance. I heard one of them ask a roustabout if he had noticed a well-dressed man down on deck lately. He of course had not, as Bill had gone back up the kitchen stairs, and with these devils was raising Cain, looking for me, and my disguise had not been discovered under the darkness of the night.

The boat was plowing her way along up the coast. The stevedores were shouting to the darkies, hurrying them along with the freight for a landing soon to be reached. The boat's whistle blew, and soon she was heading in for shore. A crowd of these fellows were waiting for me, as they suspected I would try and get off. They were looking, mind you, for a well-dressed man. As soon as the boat landed about ten of them, guns in hand, ran out over the stage to shore and closely scanned the face of every person that came off. There was a stack of plows to be discharged from the boat's cargo, and noting the fact, I shouldered one and with it followed the long line of "coons" amid the curses of the mates, and fairly flew past these men who were hunting me. I kept on up the high bank and over the levee, and when I threw my plow in the pile with the

others, made off for the cotton fields and laid flat on my back until the boat got again under way, and the burning pine in the torches on deck had been extinguished.

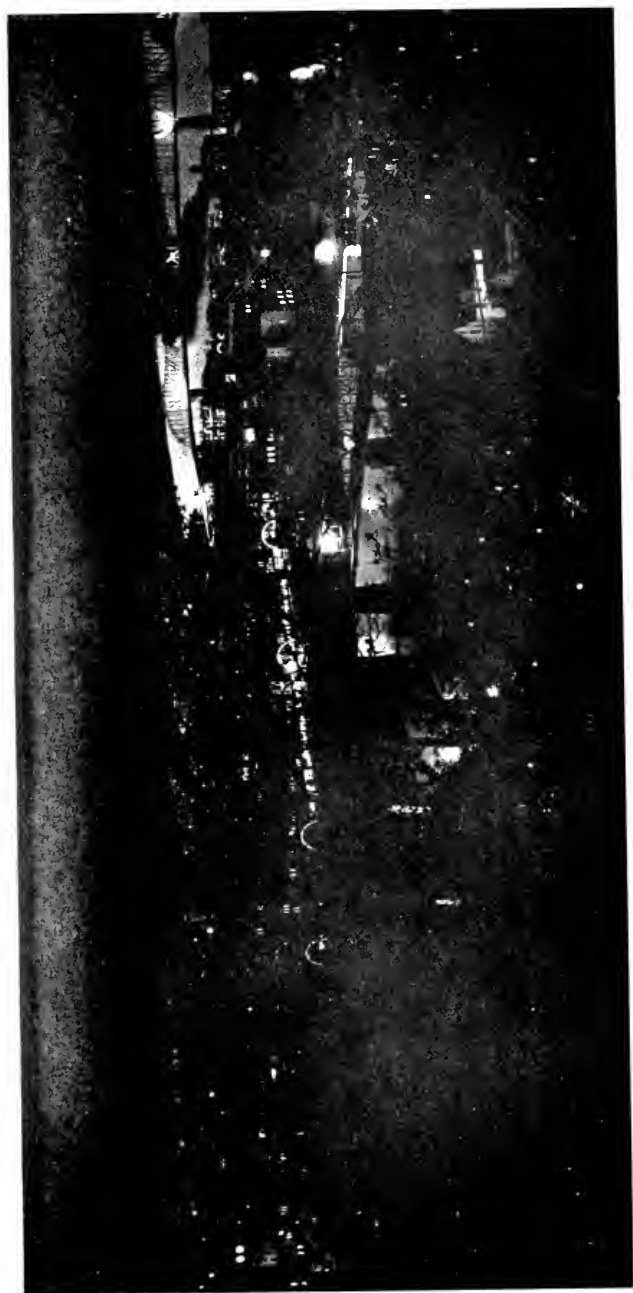
It was a close call, I can assure you. Bill met me at Vicksburg the next day and brought the boodle, which we divided. He said the crowd took lights and searched the boat's hold for me after we left the landing. Bill must have played his part well as he told me afterward that they never suspected him. . . . The river was, for the greater portion of my career, my strongest hold. But it's all over now. Even should a man strike a big winning, there are always too many Smart Alexs about and you would have to whack up with so many that there would be little left for the winner.

## Chapter XV

### The Workshop of the World

WITH the closing of the nineteenth century the Ohio River has passed from the Steamboat Age to the Age of the Steel Barge. The rapid building of railways and the fast-growing network of electric roads on the banks of the Ohio make it certain that, as a route of passenger travel, except for pleasure, the old days of princely passenger boats will never return. But, on the other hand, the old days of the flatboat and barge are fast returning, and though the human element which was so picturesque will be wanting, there is a marvellous future history in the commercial development of America to be wrought out along the sweeping shores of the River of Many White Caps.

Though comparatively little money has been spent in improving the Ohio, something has been done and more is promised; millions have been spent for slack-water navigation on the principal tributaries of the Ohio, until now one standing on the point of land at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela at Pittsburg and, looking north, west, and south, may, in the mind's eye, picture a scene perhaps never to be equalled elsewhere in the history of the world. One may now start from that point in a steamboat of more



An Ohio River City (Marietta) at Night.

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tonnage than any in which Champlain ever crossed the Atlantic and steam four thousand four hundred and six miles and not go out of the Ohio River Basin; and on that journey pass through the richest portion of the American continent, supporting nearly sixteen million happy and progressive people. When slack-water navigation has made every mile of all those thousands navigable, in every month of the year, the Ohio River drainage area will be an empire as great as France, as fruitful as any similar area on the face of the earth, and threaded throughout its vast extent by a waterway controlled by the national government, affording the cheapest method of forwarding freight that is known in the civilized world.

There are men within the sound of my voice [said Congressman Stanley of Kentucky, when addressing the Ohio Valley Improvement Association at Evansville, Indiana] who can remember the time when Chicago was a hunter's camp upon an untroubled stream and a placid lake. . . . And yet what are the cities of Chicago and St. Louis? They are but the caps and breakers upon that great wave of progress and of power that finds its expression in those massive works. Behind the city of Chicago and behind the city of St. Louis are millions of toiling Americans who made those cities great, simply because it was at that point in Missouri and at that point in Illinois where the products of the mines and of the fields could find most ready exchange for the product of the mill. Around you on every side are fields more fertile than those that feed the city of St. Louis or the city of Chicago. Within your hills along this valley is wealth unknown to any citizen of the plain; and citizenship as energetic, as willing, as earnest, and as patriotic. And I tell you that I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but one of the results of this movement of river improvement will be that along the valley of the Ohio, God's Eden restored, will spring up on this great canal when it is completed, as it will be completed, the peer of any city in this or any other country on the reeling earth.

The realization of this daring dream would after all be scarcely less wonderful than the actual history of, for instance, the city of Pittsburg. A century ago Pittsburg was a collection of huts, far out on the confines of civilization. To-day our centre of population, passing near Pittsburg nearly fifty years ago, stands two hundred miles west of it. The commercial centre of the United States has more recently come over the Alleghenies from the seaboard and lies now at the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny, if, indeed, it has not moved farther west. The "Monongahela Country," to use the pioneer expression, to-day produces more freight than any similar extent of territory in the world. Within the past decade a hundred million dollars was spent in that area in new construction and extension in railways and manufacturing plants; the district in 1903 produced fourteen million tons of coke; it handled in its markets a billion feet of lumber, representing an invested capital of twenty-five million dollars; twenty-one thousand cars of fruit and produce were delivered there; a million hides were tanned there; six million pounds of copper were manufactured there; and a half million tons of wire and wire-product made it the wire centre of the world. It produced eighty-nine per cent. of the plate-glass made in America, fifty-nine per cent. of the steel, thirty-six per cent. of the pig iron, fifty per cent. of the cork, sixty-five per cent. of the table glassware, and twenty-five per cent. of the brass castings; it claims to have the largest steel, tube, tin, and electrical apparatus plants in the world. When searching for a wonder to place beside the ancient seven wonders of the world one may, in wonder and in awe, well pause before the marvellous record of



this outgrowth of the few score cabins Washington counted there in 1770.

The proposed improvement of the Ohio suggests the whole history of the government's relationship to that river since 1825 when first an attempt was made to improve it. Eight years previous to that the Legislature of Ohio took up this important matter, and passed a resolution calling upon the neighboring commonwealths to co-operate; in 1819 General Blackburn of Virginia, General John Adair of Kentucky, General E. W. Tupper of Ohio, and Walter Lowrie of Pennsylvania made a report to their several legislatures concerning a preliminary examination which they conducted.

The matter was left, however, as one of the duties of the national government, and in 1825 a feeble beginning seems to have been made in the way of clearing out some of the snags and drift-piles. Ten years later fifty thousand dollars was appropriated and until 1844 the work went on; it was confined almost wholly to removing the most dangerous obstructions. In the report of Captain Sanders, dated November 4, 1837, we find that a steam snagboat began ascending the Ohio from Louisville August 1st, and reached Letart's Falls by September 30th; it had "removed 415 snags, seven branches or tree tops, two sunken flatboats, and four piles of drift. . . . The monthly expenses of the boat are about two thousand dollars. The most of these snags were very large, many of them having a diameter of six feet at the butt, and being over one hundred feet long." Another boat started at Marietta in June and removed 317 snags, 85 logs, twenty stumps, ten rocks, 793 branches, and six

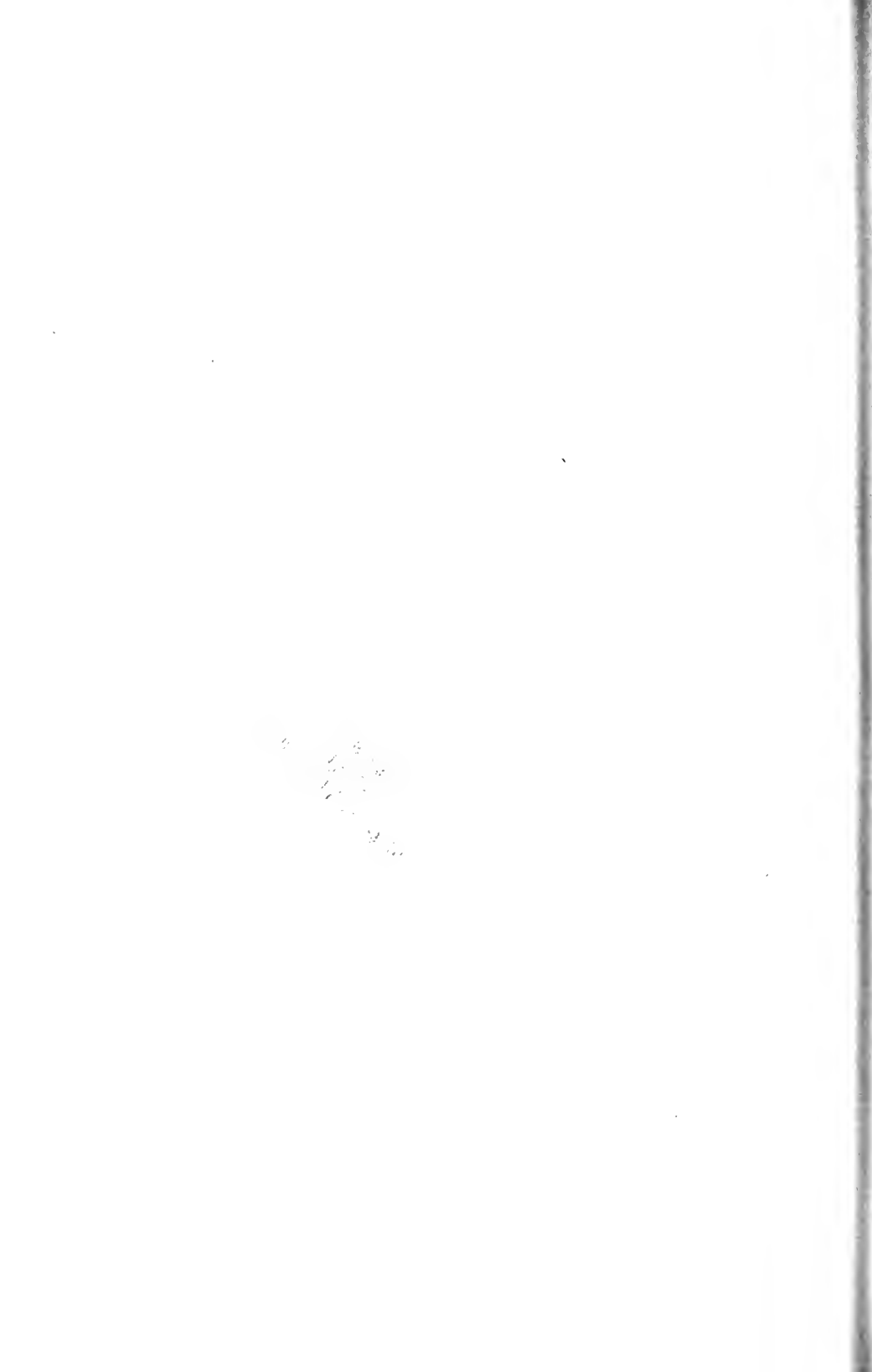
sunken boats before reaching Letart's Falls on September 30th. Up to that date, since the beginning of work, 3303 obstructions had been taken from the Ohio. In addition to this work a series of rip-rap stone dams had been started which were intended to throw the entire volume of water into one channel wherever built. To one who knows the river it is needless to say that these wing dams and some snag and dredge work constitute practically all the "improvement" known on the river to-day. The Davis Island Dam near Pittsburg and the Portland Canal around the "Falls" at Louisville are almost the only improvements of a genuine kind.

There have been a number of methods of improving the Ohio brought forward during these years, and the pamphlets published describing them would fill several volumes as large as this. The very fact that the river, for a certain portion of the year, was always navigable has seemed to militate against any serious action by Congress to make it the highway that it ought to become.

Among the plans mentioned for the improvement of the river three have occupied most attention; one plan is known as the reservoir plan, another may be called the canal plan, and the last is commonly known as the slackwater plan. The first and last have been under serious consideration for many years. The second, or "canal plan," may be disposed of by saying that it was proposed by one Herman Haupt, who drew a scheme of longitudinal mounds and cross dams so arranged as to make a canal on one side of the river two hundred or more feet in width, thereby reducing the grade between Pittsburg and Louisville to nearly



Shooting an Oil Well.



six inches per mile. In this connection it may be stated also that one Alonzo Livermore secured a patent for a combination of dams and chutes, the chutes taking the place of the ordinary lock.

When the discussion of Ohio River improvement reached its height, about 1850, it was the consensus of opinion that all schemes had been eliminated from consideration save two, the reservoir and slackwater plans. The former was a proposition to build a number of great reservoirs on the larger tributaries of the river; these, being once filled, were to deliver into the river enough water in the dry season to render navigation as practicable then as in flood-tide; an even flow of water was to be maintained permanently. By the slackwater plan the lock and dam system was to be established. The reservoir plan was advanced by Charles Ellet, Jr., in 1849. On the assumption that there was an annual downfall of water of twelve inches available in the twenty-five thousand square miles drained by the Ohio above Wheeling, and that the total cubic feet would therefore be nearly seven hundred billion, a system of reservoirs, it was argued, might regulate the amount of flowing water and give about two billion cubic feet per day; this, Mr. Ellet estimated, would give eight feet in the channel at Wheeling. Even in the driest years enough water passed Wheeling, if it could be equalized throughout the season, to afford six feet of water all the time.

The opponents of the scheme called attention to the fact that the average rainfall in different years varied greatly, and that only one third could, in reality, be depended upon to flow away. Instead of the six reservoirs described by Ellet, they urged that nine

were necessary, each containing the drainage of six hundred square miles, or fifty-four hundred in the aggregate, to cost about eighteen millions. Then the advocates of slackwater navigation, headed by W. Milnor Roberts, took much delight in attempting to find sites for the nine great inland lakes. The only stream entering the Ohio between Pittsburg and Wheeling that drained enough territory was the Big Beaver; a dam one hundred feet high on this, say between Sharon and Clarksville, would back the water seventeen miles, flood two towns, Clarksville and Greenville, and seventeen miles of the Pennsylvania Railway. If built on the Mahoning branch it would have to be located near Warren where it would submerge that town and "twenty miles of the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal, several valuable coal mines, mills and excellent farm land, and a number of miles of the Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad." None of the tributaries of the Monongahela offered a feasible site for a reservoir and that river itself was dammed and locked in the early forties. The Allegheny French Creek could not be dammed at any point and collect "more than half the drainage of six hundred square miles." A reservoir on Connewango Creek, fifteen miles above Warren, Pa., would overflow Chautauqua Lake forty feet; a dam on the Conemaugh River at Chestnut Ridge of the required height would "submerge Johnstown, the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Pennsylvania State Canal, the State Railroad above Johnstown and the Cambria Iron Works." No other Allegheny tributary could give a drainage of six hundred square miles. Above Pittsburg but five tributaries drained this amount and in almost every case important towns

must be sacrificed. It can be imagined the indignation that would be felt by citizens of any town to know that its site was to be given up to a reservoir for the benefit of the navigation of a river twenty, fifty, or a hundred miles distant!

The United States Government has, in the last decade, appropriated twenty million dollars for Ohio River improvement and several dams with locks have been erected; the largest single appropriation was made in 1905 of four and one-half millions, being  $14\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total appropriation for all rivers and harbors of the country. The desire of the cities and industrial interests most dependent on the river is to secure a nine-foot stage of water by means of locks and dams erected throughout the valley from Cairo to Pittsburg; at the present time (June, 1906) it is stated that two competent government engineers are taking up the entire proposition from all points of view and will submit a report to the government which will probably be decisive.

Andrew Carnegie has predicted that the Ohio Valley will become the "workshop of the world" [said Hon. R. B. Naylor, Secretary of the Wheeling Board of Trade, in a recent address before the Ohio Valley Historical Society]; the present commerce of the river is immense, and what it will become when the great stream is locked and dammed from Pittsburg to Cairo, no man can say. Three years ago the tonnage was 14,000,000 equal to that of the world's famous Suez Canal, and it has increased since then; if the waterway is navigable all the year round, it would probably not be too much to say that the tonnage would be five times this figure. The Ohio River system, which includes that great stream and its tributaries, embraces 4500 miles, draining six States, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois, with a population, according to

the latest figures, of 21,700,000, or at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of all the people of the United States. These great States produce most of the coal in this Union, make most of the iron, produce most of the natural gas, make every conceivable manufactured article, and the commerce and industry of the United States have their highest exemplification there. They are great States and all will contribute a large measure in fulfilling the prophecy of Andrew Carnegie.

Every element of successful manufacturing is found in these sections, and the improvement of the Ohio River is the only thing needed to make the valley's commercial supremacy still greater. Great cities dot this region on every hand, beginning with Pittsburg on the north, with a tonnage of 86,636,680 greater than that of London, New York, Antwerp, and Hamburg combined; with a coal output, in the immediate locality, as great as that of France; with an iron and steel production larger than that of Great Britain; with a steel-rail output greater than that of Germany; with a pig-iron production nearly as large as that of Russia and France—an industrial development which is the wonder of our times. Coming down from Pittsburg, we find the valley lined with little Pittsburgs, all growing and thriving and emulating that great city. We have East Liverpool, one of the greatest pottery centres of the United States. We have Steubenville, with great mills and manufactories. We have New Cumberland, Follansbee, and Wellsburg, making sewer pipe, tin plate, and glassware, and many other products which are sent all over the country. We have Wheeling, the metropolis of West Virginia, and a little Pittsburg in very truth, with great iron and steel plants, with extensive potteries, big glass-houses and a large number of manufacturing plants in many lines. The Greater Wheeling embraces a population of 125,000, and is destined to play a great rôle in the fulfilment of the Scotchman's prophecy. Below Wheeling we find Sisterville, New Martinsville, beautiful Marietta, Parkersburg and Huntington, and many other communities which are rapidly increasing in population and development along all lines. We have Cincinnati, the Queen City of the West, a prosperous and progressive metropolis, with industries and interests as large and diversified as any city of





Steel Mills at Benwood, Ohio.

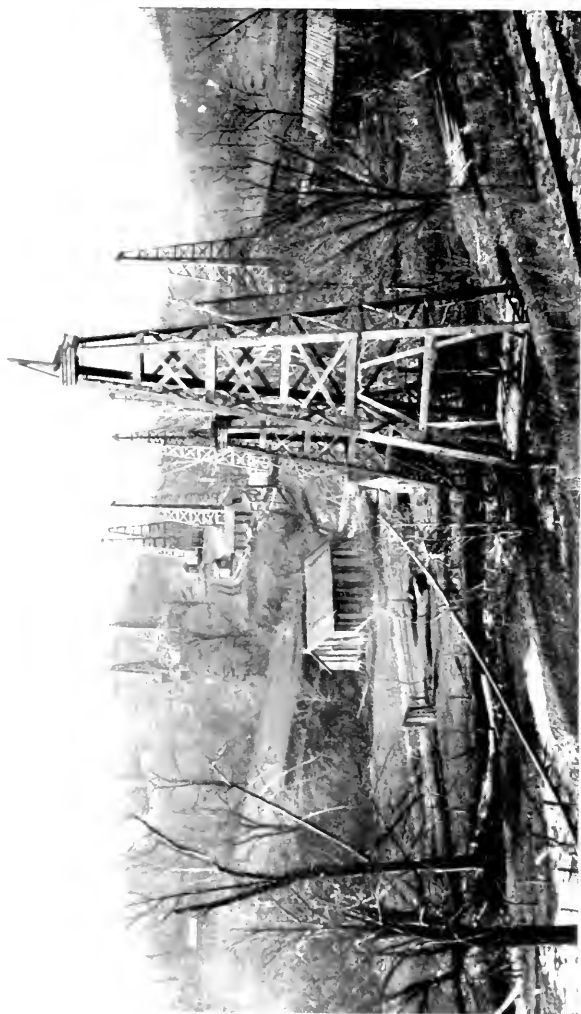
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similar size in the country. We have Portsmouth, Evansville, Louisville, Paducah, and many others which are forging ahead at a rapid rate, and finally Cairo at the meeting of the great Ohio and the Father of Waters. These cities are located directly on the great river from which the valley receives its name, but hundreds of others, on the tributaries of the Ohio, will do their share toward making the valley, in truth, the workshop of the world.

When the United States completes the improvement of the navigation of the Ohio River by erecting the dams and locks which will afford nine feet of water the year round, the marvellous record of Pittsburg and Cincinnati may, as hinted, be equalled or eclipsed by towns that now are unknown. For the conditions here are marvellously answered; the supply of coal in the Ohio Basin is almost inestimable; the coal in the "Monongahela Country" will last for centuries; it is estimated that the coal fields on the Big Sandy would last the entire United States three centuries, while the vast Wabash coal veins are quite inexhaustible. And here, leading to these great fields of fuel, lies this water communication affording a cheaper freight rate than ever was or ever can be offered by any other known method of transportation. To-day, when the Ohio is filled with bars and wrecks and reefs, when for months, sometimes, the smallest packets cannot ply on it, the steel barge is playing a most important part commercially. Through the days of drought they are slowly accumulating at the head of the Ohio into vast fleets ready to be unloosened when a "rise" comes. It is difficult for one unacquainted with the subject to believe what tremendous loads such a giant towboat as the *Sprague* can carry

up and down the Ohio. There is, of course, a limit beyond which Ohio towboats cannot go; the *Sprague* is too large, and has been in trouble since leaving the stocks. She can carry one hundred empty barges down-stream and as many as seventy loaded barges up-stream. The tremendous dimensions of these cargoes can be appreciated better when it is known that a single towboat has taken a load of coal in barges down the Ohio River which could not be put on a train of freight cars eleven miles long.

With the completion of a permanent nine-foot stage of water, by means of locks and dams, two great changes will at once occur; smaller fleets will be floated to just fit the locks, and the supply will be steady; manufacturing plants along the Ohio will not have to lay in a supply of coal at the moment when high water will allow it to be brought to them, whatever the price. This will result in a great advantage to the manufacturers of the valley. Great firms with their own tows and towboats will secure fuel from one of the many inexhaustible coal-fields in the navigable Ohio Basin at a figure marvellously low; the Ohio costs no right of way; it is kept in repair by the government; where can conditions be found more promising for a great commercial advance? The Age of the Steel Barge has just begun; it will last while coal remains the fuel of our manufacturies; and for every barge of coal there will be another barge loaded with the manufactured product which will go to millions of homes at the same remarkably cheap freight rate. As a site for manufacturing plants the Ohio of the Steel Barge Age offers an opportunity that will be quickly seized.



A Line of Oil Derricks.

THE  
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With the new era will come, let us believe, a fresh patriotic interest in the marvellous national drama that has been playing in this winding valley since Céloron's men-at-arms buried their leaden plates beside it and shouted their echoing *Vive le Roi!* across its waters. Whatever shall be the advance until the prophecy that this valley becomes the "workshop of the world" is fulfilled, the fine river will never more truly be "a course of empire" than it was in those simple days when the boatman's horn was luring a nation westward along the bright, clear path to a new realm richer and dearer than any India. There are no "Lachine Rapids" in the Ohio River—named in derision of explorers who believed the stream led to a bright land that could never be found! In the commercial awakening of the twentieth century this river will probably play the part it played in that of the nineteenth, for it leads to as rich and free a portion of our nation as may anywhere be found.

The heroism of the old-time actors is a rich heritage that must become more precious if patriotism and love of country are to wax and not wane. It is a camp-fire legend that the unwearied Washington, during a dark hour in the Revolution, pointed to the Alleghanies and asserted that if the British should conquer American liberties along the seaboard, where the war was waging, he would lead the shattered remnant of the Continentals beyond those rough ridges into the forest-land where the battles of his boyhood were fought, and make his last stand for the Republic there. It was not, perhaps, solely because of the inaccessibility of the region that led the man to dream that brave, sad dream. He knew the strain of blood that was hewing

away those western woods,—that no truer flowed in mortal veins.

Our task, to-day, is, in Lincoln's beautiful, immortal words, to be rededicated, in order that those who lived and builded here should not have lived and built in vain; that, with all the blinding, brilliant commercial strides as the Ohio becomes the "workshop of the world," that old-time sense of individual responsibility for the nation's progress should not perish from the long, wind-swept bottoms of the Ohio or the purple hills that sentinel it.



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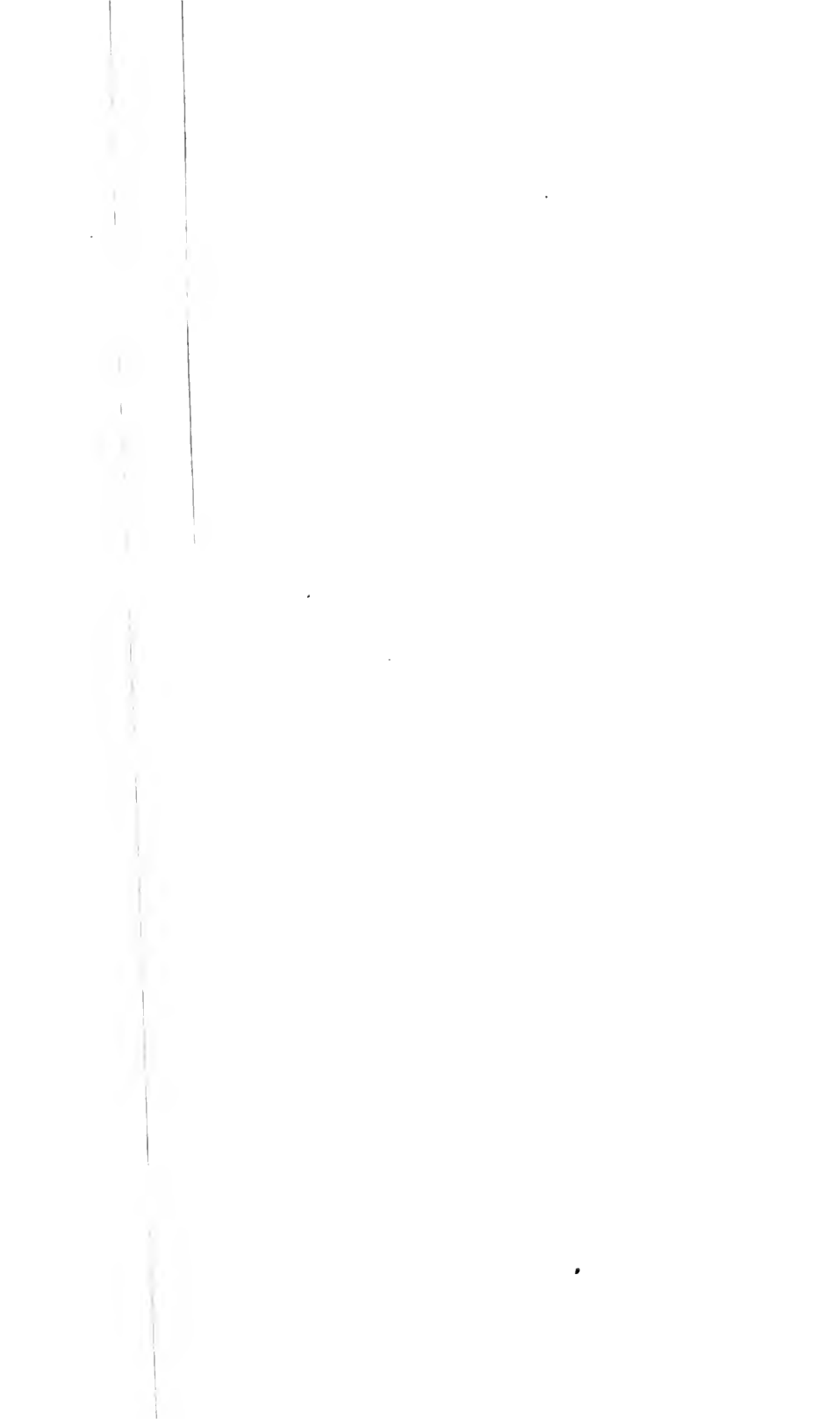
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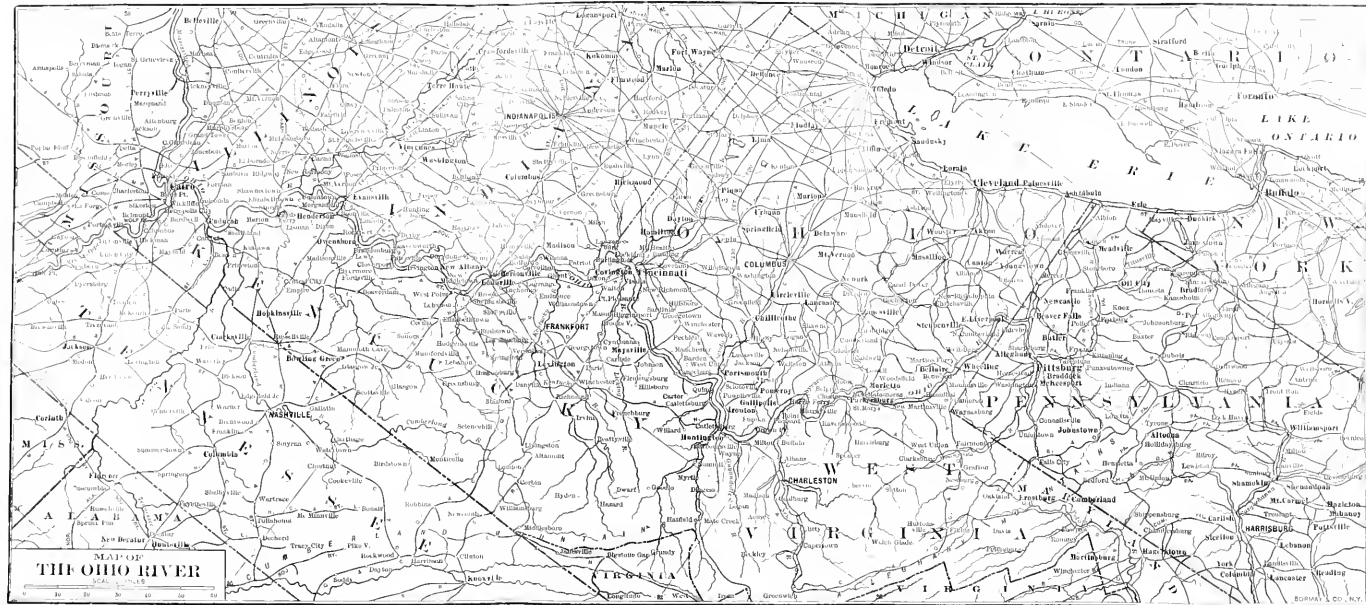
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